University of Alberta

Queer Youth and Strange Representations in the Province of the "Severely Normal"

by

Gloria Elizabeth Alice Filax

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

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The economy of the nation, the empire of business within the republic, both include in their basic premise the concept of perpetual warfare. It is the history of the idea of war that is beneath our other histories....But around and under and above it is another reality; like desert-water kept from the surface and the seed, like the old desert-answer needing its channels, the blessings of much work before it arrives to act and make flower. This history is the history of possibility.

-Muriel Rukeyser, *The Life of Poetry*

The revolutionary artist, the relayer of possibility, draws on such powers, in opposition to a technocratic society's hatred of multiformity, hatred of the natural world, hatred of the body, hatred of darkness and women, hatred of disobedience. The revolutionary poet loves people, rivers, others creatures, stones, trees inseparably from art, is not ashamed of any of these loves, and for them conjures a language that is public, intimate, inviting, terrifying, and beloved.

-Adrienne Rich, What If? In *What is found there: Notebooks on poetry and politics.*

Abstract

The four papers that comprise this dissertation together represent an account of the negotiations of queer youth in Alberta in relation to discourses that overwhelmingly deny the value of these young people's lives. Theoretically, this dissertation can be viewed as an examination of representations of youth, gender, and sexuality through an investigation of expert, legal, and popular cultural discourses. I was interested in how sexual identity as well as youth and gender identities are discursively constructed and how queer youth negotiate the contradictions of these discourses.

The province of Alberta is unique in Canada for its governmental challenges to the legal rights of lesbians and gays. Alberta is also the home of the widely circulated, *Alberta Report* (now *The Report*), a weekly magazine, which, in almost every issue, represents gays and lesbians as disgusting deviants. Yet, Alberta is also the home of some important initiatives with respect to 'queer' youth in schools. And, of course, most young people in Alberta have access to a popular culture that extends well beyond the provincial boundaries through television, movies, videos, the Internet, books, and magazines, all of which provide a range of representations of 'queer' people.

The purpose of this research was to explore the effects of these conflicting discourses on queer youth in Alberta schools by documenting how these youth make sense of their identity, reality, and experiences. In part, this was a project of "surfacing" what Foucault referred to as "subjugated knowledges" (1979), in order to demonstrate that queer youth *are* present in Alberta schools, and to open up academic and intellectual space for further queer research in Alberta.

Dedication/s

I am superstitious and thus, in the event I never write again, my dedication is necessarily long.

For the queer youth who participated with me and thus made this dissertation possible: many, many thanks.

In memory of Morgan MacIntyre, who disappeared in the Battle of the Somme, as if he never existed. For his sister Elizabeth MacIntyre who mourned his loss thereafter.

In memory of my dearly loved father, Arthur John Filax.

In memory of Sheryl Ann McInnes, David Kales, and Saffire, whose deaths and physical absence during my research years, prolonged but enriched the completion of my dissertation in myriad ways.

For precious felines who keep queer researchers sane: bell, Sekhmut, Bonnie, Orlando, Silken, Elfin, Morgan, Willow, and of course, Flame. For capricious canine Storm, who keeps precious felines on their toes.

For Elaine Jean Filax, cherished sister and friend.

For my darling son Ryan Lindsay Morgan, I love you.

For Jacqueline Dumas, fearless, timeless friend.

For queer life forms everywhere, may they continue to exist in spite of apathy, indifference, and active homophobia.

Especially for Debra Ann Shogan, lov(h)er, soul mate, queer intellectual.

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My thanks to Marilyn Assheton-Smith for continuing with me long after her retirement. Peggy Wilson is a dear friend and cherished colleague, the first to encourage me to investigate the lives of queer youth in Alberta when my first topic became unbearably boring. Peggy also gently reminded me that traditional Aboriginal societies hold promise and possibilities that White culture does not. jan jagodzinski kept me on my toes with his expertise in psychoanalysis, reminding me there are other questions to be asked about subjugated knowledges.

Special thanks to Dennis Sumara for 'loving' my dissertation during the last terrible months I was writing. Dennis's enthusiasm for my work gave me the boost which allowed me to finish. I eagerly look forward to ongoing friendship and future collaboration with Dennis. My thanks to Janine Brodie for providing opportunities for my intellectual work. Gerry Taylor quietly, competently stayed with me through candidacy and final exam, no doubt wondering if I was going to finish.

Many others have provided me with friendship and intellectual support over the past seven years. Yoke-Sum Wong holds a special place of regard for being at least three or four theorists ahead of me and making this part of our friendship. Monica Kreiner shines from the north. A special thank you to the "educating in global times" group: Sue Brigham, Donna Chovanec, Hector Gonzalez, and Jenny Kelly. My thanks, as well, to the Remedians, a group of intellectuals who happen to be graduate students interested in discussing theory and partying. The Orlando Books Collective has made collaborative writing a meaningful new way of writing. My dear friend and colleague, Jacqueline Dumas, has provided me with wonderful friendship, gossip, and ongoing intellectual stimulation. Malinda Smith, even when she is flying off to points unknown, has been a steadfast friend. Pat Boyle, formerly of the Calgary Board of Education, generously shared her time and insights over what was a horrific incident in her working career in the battle against heterosexism and homophobia. I am grateful for her generosity to me as well as her tenacity in the face of extreme adversity. From a distance Jean-Bob Noble, Maureen Ford, Bob Wallace, and Roewan Crowe have encouraged me with love and good vibrations.

My family, mother Muriel, sisters Muriel and Vivien, have left me to my project while perhaps not understanding why I have been in school so long. I love them and acknowledge their continued importance to me. Elaine, Ryan, and Robert have been especially faithful and unconditional in their love, friendship, and care for me. I am eternally indebted to each and offer my love and care as without them I would not have completed this work.

Finally, I am indebted to the unofficial committee member, the one who sustains my spirit and intellect, Dr. Debra Shogan, a.k.a. Swede, who has been my muse and disciplinarian throughout this work. I could not have done this work without the love, energy, hard-nosed editorial work, and intellectual companionship of Debra. For better or worse, my work and my self/ves are effects of her discourse/s: wildly, wonderfully, provocatively queer!

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Introduction

and when we speak we are afraid
our words will not be heard
nor welcomed
but when we are silent
we are still afraid

So it is better to speak
remembering
we were never meant to survive
(Lorde 1978, pp. 31-3)

I hated junior high. Even though I had not admitted to myself that I was gay until grade 9 it seems that everyone else figured it out before me and then discriminated against me. I found a poem that I wrote around that time. It's not that good a poem because it was written by a 13-year-old, but it explains how I felt.

Discrimination

The hatred of differences within humans.
A terrible crime when committed.
A serious problem of the human race,
caused when two different individuals conflict.

One–a poor soul whose disturbed and troubled state receives little
sympathy.
One–an inventor of mistreatment whose own ideas of superiority have
been passed down from
his or
her forebearers.
Discrimination.
When committed, it causes great pain.

Discrimination.
The problem revolves around opinions of others.
Why does it happen?
Everyone is and deserves the same.
Why must it happen?
Why?

It is horrible!

Discrimination.
A problem that must be stopped.

Discrimination.
One of the factors that helped to
create our sick and toxic society.
Discrimination.
A part of the predicament in which our
world is.
Discrimination.

Almost unsolvable.
Discrimination is.
(Ruldolf, 1998)

The four papers that comprise this dissertation together represent an account of the negotiations of queer youth in Alberta in relation to discourses that overwhelmingly deny the value of these young people's lives. Theoretically, this dissertation can be viewed as an examination of representations of youth, gender, and sexuality through an investigation of expert, legal, and popular cultural discourses. I am interested in how sexual identity as well as youth and gender identities are discursively constructed and how queer youth negotiate the contradictions of these discourses. By discourse I mean a regulated system of knowledge supported by social institutions that contain what can be spoken, how it may be spoken about, and who can speak it. Discourses produce positions from which people can speak as well as related social practices. For example, in educational discourses, teachers, counselors, principals, and other professionals involved in schooling have particular positions from which they can speak and act that are different from and have more status than what students or youth can say about education or how they can act within educational discourse.

The province of Alberta is unique in Canada for its governmental challenges to the legal rights of lesbians and gays. Alberta is also the home of the widely circulated, *Alberta Report (*now *The Report)*, a weekly magazine, which, in almost every issue, represents gays and lesbians as disgusting deviants. Yet, Alberta is also the home of some important initiatives with respect to 'queer' youth in schools such as the Calgary Board of Education's "An Action Plan for Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Youth and Staff Safety" (1996). And, of course, most young people in Alberta have access to a popular culture that extends well beyond the provincial boundaries through television, movies, videos, the Internet, books, and magazines, all of which provide a range of representations of 'queer' people.

The purpose of this research was to explore the effects of these conflicting discourses on queer youth in Alberta schools by documenting how these youth make sense of their identity, reality, and experiences in the context of heteronormative, homophobic, as well as alternative discourses. In part, this was a project of "surfacing" what Foucault

referred to as "subjugated knowledges" (1979, p. 81), in order to demonstrate that queer youth *are* present in Alberta schools, and to open up academic and intellectual space for further queer research in Alberta.

Poststructuralist Approach

In the following four papers, I explore representations of sexual, gender, and youth identity using a poststructuralist approach. While poststructuralism has a number of deployments, the poststructuralist strategies I undertake are "critical interrogation[s] of exclusionary practices by which 'positions' are established" (Butler and Scott, 1992, p. xiv). Michel Foucault's work on discourse has been central to this undertaking as has deconstruction and, to some extent, Freudian psychoanalysis.

In *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*, Foucault (1980) described ways in which human sciences of sexuality create an imperative in people to know the Truth about themselves and others through 'knowing' and confessing sexual practices. Indeed, knowing one's self and others through sexual practices, "in modern Western culture [is] the most meaning intensive of human activities" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 5). Through confessional technologies and their supporting discourses, sexual identities are created and regulated which, in turn, are central to the constitution of the subject as both subject to and subject of sexual (and other) discourses (Foucault, 1980). Both identity and consciousness of identity take place in contexts that constrain available identity categories. To problematize identity, then, is to interrogate ways in which individuals take up identity categories, as well as ways in which categories are socially produced. I take up this two pronged approach to subjectivity by exploring ways in which queer youth in Alberta schools are both subject of and subject to expert, legal, and popular discourses as these intersect with discourses about sexuality.

While Foucault is helpful in theorizing how discourses function to solidify gender and sexuality, Judith Butler (1989) helps us see that gender and sexuality are unstable and must necessarily fail. As I discuss in my paper, "Gendering: Troubled Theories, Troubling Identities" and my paper "Production and Consumption of Youthful Identities: Understanding Queer Youth in the Context of Youth Studies and Popular Culture", the necessary failure of gender and sexuality exposes the non-innocent agenda of discourses like psychology and psychiatry as well as educational discourses, that have a stake in producing notions of gender and youth normality and deviance.

In order for heterosexuality to function as the normal, natural, and given, it must have its abnormal, unnatural, absent other: the homosexual. Both deconstruction and psychoanalytic theory make it possible to expose the ways in which heteronormativity is constructed through exclusion of the queer 'other'. Deconstruction interrogates a category's "construction as a pregiven or foundationalist premise" (Butler, 1992, p. 9) and demonstrates "how the very establishment of the system as a system implies a beyond to it, precisely by virtue of what it excludes" (Cornell, 1992, p. 1). Deconstruction calls into question, problematizes, and "opens up" a category for "a reusage or redeployment that previously has not been authorized" (Butler 1992, p. 15). By utilizing deconstruction, I

am able to uncover the pervasiveness of the 'homosexual' as the "special Other" of heterosexuality (Halperin, 1995). Homosexuality is not a stable or autonomous term but a supplement to the definition of the heterosexual. 'The homosexual' functions as a means of stabilizing heterosexual identity and, as such, is the limit or the beyond of 'the heterosexual'.

Psychoanalytic theory makes it possible to see 'the homosexual' as an imaginary Other whose flamboyant difference deflects attention from the contradictions inherent in the construction of heterosexuality. Often this deflection is through a demonization process in which the actions of queer people are always already perverse in the negative sense by virtue of being queer. Perverse actions then become the defining features of what is queer. Heterosexuality is able to thrive precisely by preserving and consolidating its internal contradictions at the same time as it preserves and consolidates ignorance of them.

Queer Theory

> While "social theory as a quasi-institution for the past century has returned continually to the question of sexuality" it has done so "with an endless capacity to marginalize queer sexuality in its descriptions of the social world" (Warner 1994, p. ix).

Social theory and practice renders "unknown" the relations of power in which heterosexuality is implicated. What has emerged as "Queer Theory" in the 1990s utilizes Foucaultian discursive analysis, deconstruction, and psychoanalytic theory to debunk the notion of stable sexes, genders, and sexualities (Jagose, 1996, p. 3). Two prominent contemporary thinkers in queer theory that I take up in these papers, Judith Butler and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, both insist on the importance of holding gender and sexuality as distinct categories which are nevertheless implicated in one another.

'Queer', as reclaimed identification, was coined at a conference theorizing lesbian and gay sexualities held at the University of California, Santa Cruz in February 1990. The conference was based on the speculative premise that homosexuality is no longer defined either by opposition or homology to a dominant, stable form of sexuality (heterosexuality) or as merely transgressive or deviant in relation to a proper or natural sexuality. Participants were invited to reconceptualize male and female homosexualities as social and cultural forms in their own right, even if under-coded and discursively dependent on more established forms of sexuality. In the words of Teresa de Lauretis:

> [R]ather than marking the limits of the social space by designating a place at the edge of culture, gay sexuality in its specific female and male cultural (or subcultural) forms acts as an agency of social process whose mode of functioning is both interactive and yet resistant, both participatory and yet distinct, claiming at once equality and difference, demanding political representation while insisting on its material and historical specificity. (1990, p. 3)

Lesbian and gay academics reclaimed the word 'queer' as the label for intellectual-political resistance strategies. 'Queer' has come to stand in for a range of subjectivities that defy 'the normal', including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and transgender. There are many, however, who refuse to be contained by the term 'queer' for various reasons including that it is perceived to be eurowestern, white, male, and therefore exclusionary. While I take up 'queer', I do so cautiously and reflexively and adjust my research to challenges from those who do not identify with it.

This research is framed by the acknowledgment that heteronormativity is a structuring principle, just as gender, race, and class are structuring principles. As developed within queer social theory (Warner, 1994; Terry & Urla, 1995; Nicholson & Seidman, 1995; Kinsman, 1996; Whisman,1996; Beemyn & Eliason, 1996; Morton, 1996; Seidman ,1996), heteronormativity refers to the normalization, naturalization and universalization of practices of heterosexuality. Everyday meanings, representations, and activities of heterosexuality are organized in such a way that heterosexuality seems natural, neutral, inevitable, and universal. The assumption of heterosexuality renders all other sexual practices as nonexistent or as deviant and abnormal. Heteronormativity, then, is relational (Patton, 1994), constructed in relation to an often unnamed but abnormal 'other'. Heteronormativity makes possible heterosexism, homophobia and heterosexist and homophobic discourses, which, in turn, also become normalized, universalized, and naturalized.

A consequence of heteronormativity is that issues related to the 'abnormal other' are what, Sedgwick refers to as a "minoritizing view". A minoritizing view sees "homo/heterosexual definition...as an issue of active importance primarily for a small, distinct, relatively fixed homosexual minority". Sedgwick contrasts this with what she refers to as a "universalizing view", which is "an issue of continuing, determinative importance in the lives of people across the spectrum of sexualities (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 1). As Sedgwick points out, understanding any human subjectivity requires understanding the centrality of the "nominally marginal" homosexual in the discursive formation of heterosexuality. The papers that comprise this dissertation insist on the position that understanding how the homo/heterosexual divide produces subjectivity is of importance to everyone. I do this by showing how gender discourses work to keep intact the assumption that there is a coherency from sexed bodies, to behavior, to sexual desire and practice; how mainstream Youth Studies assumes the heterosexual subject; how legal discourses in Canada have produced sexual minority legal status; and finally how a right wing weekly magazine, *The Alberta Report*, actively works to police the borders between 'the homosexual' and 'the heterosexual'.

Ethnographic Interviews

In order to situate the stories of queer youth in Alberta within the expert, legal, and popular discourses that impact their lives, in 1998 I undertook ethnographic interviews with twelve youth who were currently or recently students in Alberta schools. Ethnographic interviews are a form of data collection based on ethnographic

methodology. Ethnography consists of a process and a relationship between researcher and those researched in which those researched are acknowledged as knowers and experts. Ethnography attempts to uncover this knowledge. Ethnographic research relies on the researcher being *in situ* to witness, interrogate, and record experiences.

Ethnographic methods allowed me to explore queer culture and, in particular, ethnographic interviews were a way for me to do an in-depth exploration as an insider researcher of a culture without a place. Even though my interest was, in part, how queer youth negotiate Alberta schools, I did not engage in participant observation of these youth because of the threat this would have posed to the safety of those observed who are queer, questioning or suspect of being queer.

Immersion in queer culture is difficult when there is no geographic place that one can locate as "queer". Unlike Spradley's homeless men who can be located as a group within particular geographic places in inner city areas and streets, queer people are dispersed and yet everywhere. Neither are queer people contained by race, class, gender, religion, age, physicality, or nation. Warner (1994) writes that the notions of community and culture are, in fact, problematic for queer people. For Warner "much of lesbian and gay history is about noncommunity, and . . . dispersal rather than localization continues to be definitive of queer self-understanding" (1994, p. xxv). Adam (1996) calls this a colony away from an original homeland likening it to a diasporic community (p. 121). However, unlike Jewish peoples, queer people have no collective homeland from which we have been dispersed. Dispersal, non-community, and lack of home are some of the defining features of queer living, often especially so for queer youth. The location of queer people-- the diasporic space -- is often the closet. The closet may be the psychic space of not being out or the psychic space of being out to other's meaning making of what it is to be homosexual (Butler, 1990, p. xx).

It is possible, however, to do a participant observation of heteronormative culture, that from which queers are dispersed, and the ways in which heteronomative culture structures life for queer youth in and out of the closet. I was, then, in the unique place of being an ethnographer in the classical sense. I was permitted the peculiar advantage of observing heteronormal culture from the vantage of a queer person. I was an outsider, a traditional ethnographer, in this heteronormal world; "a stranger in a strange land".

This positionality as queer ethnographer is not without its risks, however. As David Halperin (1995) indicates, queer researchers are often placed in a double bind in which they risk not being heard because of their perceived deviance.

> And if to speak as a gay man [queer] about a topic that directly implicates one's own interests is already to surrender a sizable share of one's claims to be heard, listened to, and taken seriously, then to speak not as the designated representative of a subcultural minority but as a dedicated critic of heterosexual presumption is surely to put the remaining share of one's credibility at risk. (p. 138)

The double bind is writing from within a heteronormalized culture in which the queer researcher is both the subject of what she writes and objectified as deviant. To refuse designation as representative token, while insisting on status as a critic of heteronormative culture, risks undermining one's authority as a researcher. The question, at its most basic, is whether one can be queer and scholarly at the same time. Disallowing the critical queer scholar to function as an authorized category is implicated in the same logic that deauthorizes, delegitimizes, and silences social deviants. The 'truth' of 'deviant' existence is specified through objectifying and pathologizing terms. Thus the conundrum of the queer intellectual is "the inescapably vexed, treacherous, and volatile politics of any attempt... to write about the meaning of a socially deviant life" (Halperin 1995, p. 134).[1]

In order to effectively research and write about heteronormativity, I take up 'culture' as understood within British Cultural Studies. Within this tradition, culture means "the social production and reproduction of sense, meaning and consciousness" (O'Sullivan et al, 1994). Culture, then, is a significant sphere in which social power inequalities are produced and reproduced. In the context of this study, then, 'culture', refers to the dominant heteronormative culture. When I refer to 'queer culture', on the other hand, I am using an anthropological definition of culture in which culture refers to shared values (Spradley, 1979). My work takes up Marcus and Fischers' (1986) notion of anthropology as cultural critique in which the critical function of cultural critique is to use the knowledge of other cultures, in this case queer culture, to examine the unconscious assumptions of heteronormative culture.

While I conducted ethnographic interviews with queer youth, the accounts gathered from these interviews are explored in relation to how they are situated within dominant discourses that purport to know about these youths' lives and that structure subject positions for them to occupy. I was conscious of the problems associated with asking queer youth to talk about processes of identity formation. I take seriously Foucault's critique of the modern human sciences and was aware that, as a perceived expert to these young people, I risked reinscribing expertise and reifying identity through a *scientia sexualis* (Foucault, 1980). However, surfacing the subjugated knowledges of queer youth disrupts *scientia sexualis* because these knowledges expose regimes of normalcy. Interviews conducted with queer youth are read intertextually with queer theory, gender theory, legal cases, mainstream and queer Youth Studies, and popular

---

1. In a presentation to my department, I laid out the competing discourses, located my theoretical framework within a heteronormalizing structure, located myself as queer but not representative of a "deviant subculture", and offered some preliminary sites of analysis within schools while highlighting that the important part of my research was through ethnographic interviews in which the voices of Alberta students who are lesbian or gay would be the experts of their everyday experiences. The first comment I received from an audience participant was: "So that's the end of objectivity". The objectivity/subjectivity dualism is a discursive grenade meant to damage credibility; it carries political force in a way that questioning the objectivity of the white, middle-class, heterosexual male who asked the question of me does not. It is meant to silence me. To write about this anticipates and brings the deauthorization process into question. Writing about the epistemic violence implicated in such charges exposes the 'invisibility' of yet another heteronormative response.

culture in order to get at what de Certeau described as the secondary production of meaning: the meaning, values and consciousness of those who are queer and how they use, adjust, and manipulate this category (1988, p. xiii). Since, I am also interested in how experiences of these queer youth and their understanding of these experiences have been discursively produced, it is necessary to situate these experiences within a framework of "dominant patterns of sexuality and the ideology that supports them" (Scott, 1992, p. 25).

> The project of making experience visible . . . [makes it possible] to appreciate the consequences of the closeting of homosexuals and we understand repression as an interested act of power or domination . . . .What we don't have is a way of . . . . [knowing] how they've been constructed. Making visible the experience of a different group exposes the existence of repressive mechanisms, but not their inner workings or logics; we know that difference exists, but we don't understand that it is constituted relationally. For that we need to attend to the historical processes that, through discourse, position subjects and produce their experiences. (Scott, 1992, p. 25)

The experiences of the queer youth interviewed are juxtaposed with expert and mainstream discourses in the four papers in order to make these experiences visible, but as well to expose the logic of heteronormativity.

Data Collection

In the fall of 1997, I began advertising for interested queer youth to contact me. My advertisement was placed in alternative presses, Edmonton's *Times.10, Womonspace,* and Calgary's *Outlooks*. I gave a phone number, email address and my faculty mail box for people to contact me. In addition, I attended meetings of both Edmonton and Calgary's queer youth groups and asked for participants to contact me if they were interested in telling me about their life experiences, in particular their experiences in school. My first contact came via mail in late September. Others followed by phone and email.

I arranged to meet each person for coffee so that we could get to know one another and ensure that the relationship would be sustainable for the duration of at least two sessions of two hours each. Several potential subjects did not show up for our arranged coffee and several others decided not to participate. Those who did stay with the project were evenly split numerically between Calgary and Edmonton. Of the twelve, only three were female. The youth who did participate were protected by a consent form that provided them the option of participating in the way each felt safest or to withdraw completely at any time.

One youth decided to communicate via email while the rest met with me on at least two occasions. The Edmonton interviews were conducted in offices and coffee shops around Edmonton. The Calgary interviews were more difficult. The first set included a

coffee shop and the University of Calgary campus, neither of which was suitable. A set of interviews was conducted at the local AIDS network in Calgary and another set was conducted at the International Hotel in Calgary. If the lobby staff thought anything of the series of young men passing through my hotel room each for approximately an hour and a half, no one said anything to me. I met each youth in the lobby and we proceeded to the room and then I escorted him back to the lobby where I met the next; six in a row on one weekend.

During the interviews we constructed a text which was a story of what each youth thought was important to their lives. Filling the first hour and a half of tape time was, without exception, easy. Between interviews I listened to the tapes and during follow up interviews I asked questions based on these tapes if there was a pause in what the young person wanted to say. For those who had much that they wanted to tell me, we met three to four times. By mid 1998, I had completed all my interviews.

As a consequence of my ethics review, I was asked to provide counseling opportunities if anyone was traumatized from sharing their stories with me. Without exception, the queer youth found talking about their experiences to be a highly cathartic experience. Few other adults had shown interest or compassion in what they had experienced. They did not require counseling as a result of telling me their stories; what they required were changes in policy and the eradication of forms of institutionalized and less structured discrimination.

My responsibility to these young people became more than merely telling their stories, even though that was important. I also had a responsibility to show that, while many of them had been victimized, they were not victims. As well, there was an expectation that I would take their stories and "do something with it" (Virginia, 1998; Jack, 1998; Oscar, 1998). They wanted me to put pressure on educational institutions and government to change things they felt should never have happened to them. I feel humbled and dismayed by the expectation from these youth that I could do this with my dissertation. But, then, as a proponent of Michel Foucault's account of how power and resistance work "across multiplicitous networks to unchoreographed effect", it is, as Annamarie Jagose indicates, "far from clear that writing a paper, or developing an analytical framework, is any less effective than various other gestures" towards accomplishing political goals (Jagose, 1996, p. 111).

In addition to data collection through ethnographic interviews, data sources included media, popular, and legal representations of 'queer' culture and identities in Canada and Alberta; writings about identity formation, silence, 'the closet', and queer culture from Queer theory; mainstream Youth Studies, Queer Youth Studies; and suicide studies. My work is informed by a range of social theories, including feminist, queer, cultural studies, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, history, legal, and education.

The Papers

The papers of this dissertation take up a series of questions with which a poststructuralist approach is concerned:

> What are the political operations that constrain and constitute the *field* within which positions emerge? *What exclusions* effectively constitute and naturalize that field? Through what means are [people] positioned within law, history, [and] political debates . . . . ? Who qualifies as a "subject" of history, a "claimant" before the law, a "citizen"? Through what differential and exclusionary means are such "foundational" notions constituted? And how does a radical contestation of these "foundations" expose the silent violence of these concepts as they have operated not merely to marginalize certain groups, but to erase and exclude them from the notion of "community" altogether, indeed to establish exclusion as the very precondition and possibility for "community"? (Butler and Scott, 1992, p. xiv, emphasis in original)

The first paper, "Gendering: Troubled Theories, Troubling Identities", I take up literature that shows gender to be a central, profound and unsettling discourse in relation to sexuality that produces gendered subjectivities. The rigidity of gendered discursive practices in contemporary educational practice and the effects of gender instability are exposed through the stories of queer children and youth. To provide a context for these stories and to demonstrate the relentlessness of discourses on gender that youth must negotiate, I provide an overview of gender theory, particularly with respect to the heteronormalizing impulse of much of this theory. I introduce theories that have impacted on the understanding of gender in this culture and illustrate examples from the literature of how this understanding of gender has impacted gender nonconformist children. Theoretical renderings of gender provide a context within which to understand the discourses about gender that these young people negotiate. Many of these theories about 'correct' gender behavior are embedded in discourses of education, health, family, and popular culture. I conclude the paper with a discussion of queer identity-in-formation and a speculative section on gender melancholia and its relationship to sexuality.

In the second paper, "Production and Consumption of Youth Identities: Understanding Youth in the Context of Youth Studies and Popular Culture", I examine how social science research has produced the category 'youth' and how queer youth negotiate the subject positions constrained by this category. I am also interested in how queer youth mediate the expert accounts of what it is to be a youth from Youth studies as well as popular cultural discourses about youth.

In the third paper, "Social/Legal Production of Sexual Minorities in Canada and the Impact on Education" explores how legal discourse has produced sexual minority citizen status in Canada and, in doing so, how the boundaries of illegitimate sexual minorities have been repositioned. I explore how Bill C23 and other laws and legal decisions maintain a

notion of 'normal' and 'abnormal' citizenship, even as possibilities are opened up for sexual minorities. I also look at how legal discourse has impacted education in Canada through three cases that focus on teachers and present three "stories" drawn from the ethnographic interviews with queer youth.

In the fourth and final paper, "Queer Identities and Strange Representations in the Province of the 'Severely Normal'", I identify some of the discourses that operated in Alberta from 1992 to 1998. I do this by examining representations in the *Alberta Report* and by elected officials and other citizens in the province in order to highlight the culture of moral panic about 'homosexuality' prevalent in Alberta during that time.

Since each of the papers that comprise the dissertation is a discrete paper, there is some overlap in some of the discussions. This overlap is minimal since the contexts of each--gender theory, Youth Studies, legal cases, and representations from the *Alberta Report*--are sufficiently different to produce distinct discussions about exclusionary practices that produce queer youth as outsiders to educational 'communities'.

There are a number of writing strategies I pursue in the four papers. Theoretical, legal, and expert accounts take up a disproportionate portion of the papers in relation to the voices of the youth in order to demonstrate the relentlessness and heaviness of the discourses that these youth must negotiate. As well, the relentlessness of these accounts, all coming as they do from adults, reflects the negotiations youth must make in relation to adult voices and experiences. In the first three papers, youth voices are juxtaposed with the heaviness of academic discourses that either purport to be about them or shape the world in which they live. In the fourth paper, the youth's voices are represented in relation to accounts from the *Alberta Report*, the weekly magazine that was devoted to documenting events and decisions related to the lives of queer people in Alberta, and the reactions of right wing Albertans to these. In each of the papers, the voices of the queer youth serve to deconstruct the categories produced by dominant discourses: 'gender', 'youth', 'sexuality'. In some cases, these categories are deconstructed when what the youth have to say directly contradicts what these discourses have to say about gender, youth and sexuality. In other cases, the youth voices deconstruct these categories by substantiating research that has not countenanced them. In the fourth paper, queer youth voices resist and deconstruct representations of queer people from the *Alberta Report* . These representations appear as a crescendo of hatred from a few articles in 1992 to a frenzy of diatribes that occurred leading up to, during, and immediately following the Supreme Court decision on Vriend.

In all four papers, it has been important to me to represent the stories of the queer youth in this study as more than "painful stories of subjection and pathos" (Britzman, 1995, p. 68). I have often placed what queer youth felt was important to the telling of their life in opposition to that which is considered important by adults, often experts. It would have been easy to have yielded to the statistics on suicide and stories of harassment and abuse and projected a description of how these accounts constitute the stories of these young people's lives. As the youth voices in these papers convey, their lives are not consumed by pathos.

Eve Sedgwick's book, *The Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), is based on a number of axioms, the first of which is that people are different from each other. She observes that "it is astonishing how few respectable conceptual tools we have for dealing with this self-evident fact" (1990, pp. 22-23). By placing the voices of the youth in the text in the way that I do, I hope to demonstrate that, even though they have faced common difficulties as queer youth, they are different from each other. Each has a personal life history, differently intersected by religion, family configuration, race, class, gender, physicality, ethnicity, and a range of other differences. The fragments of their voices are intended to disrupt closure or certainty and represent the partiality of lives that refuse to be trapped in totalizing academic and popular cultural discourses. By offering partial stories and fragmented voices, I resist fixing the identities of individual queer youth and instead insist on the constant, ongoing identity formation of queer subjects (Butler, 1993, p.19). Refusing to fix either them or their experiences is the very least that I can do for those queer youth who shared some parts of their lives with me for this work.

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Gendering: Troubled Theories, Troubling Identities

Subjectivity is a central focus of intellectual attention in contemporary social theories. In particular, these theories focus on inadequacies of idealist philosophical understandings of the thinking subject as a site of a free-floating consciousness and unitary identity. What is problematic is a notion of subjectivity that posits the individual as the *source* of action and meaning rather than as a *product* of action and meaning, thus ignoring the central role of language and social relations in determining, regulating and producing a "thinking subject".

Understanding how identities and subjectivities are produced requires an exploration of social processes imbued in social relations. Gender is one of these processes. Gender is often thought to follow naturally from the fact of biological sex. Since biological sex is regarded, in this view, as pre-cultural or pre-discursive, gender too is linked to the 'natural'. However, many theorists who have posited gender as cultural or discursive, as did many second wave feminists, did not question the 'fact' of biology. Conceiving bodies or sex as 'natural' and gender as 'cultural' effectively retained a notion that at least some aspect of the self exists prior to discourse.

Human subjects are born into complex cultural contexts with already existing notions of what it means to be embodied as male or female. In this chapter, I take up literature that shows gender to be a central, profound and *unsettling* discourse that produces gendered subjectivities. Gendered subjects, including what comes to count as their physicality, are produced *after the fact* of discourse.

While gender discourse is relentless in its imperative of a two-sex, two-gender heterosexuality, gendering processes are necessarily unstable (Butler, 1990). The instability of gendering reveals the ways in which those subjects who do not conform to gender rigid discourse are disciplined. In this paper, both the rigidity of gendered discursive practices in contemporary educational practice and the effects of gender instability are exposed through case studies of queer children and youth. To provide a context for these case studies and to demonstrate the relentlessness of discourses on gender that youth must negotiate, I provide an overview of gender theory, particularly with respect to the heteronormalizing impulse of much of this theory.

Two theorists, Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, are particularly germane to the way in which I think about gender theory. From Foucault, I draw on an understanding of identities as relational, hierarchical and disciplined and on a notion of power as productive and present in all interactions between humans. Human relationships produce identity within the discursive practices of a culture. Identity production is an active project through which we are disciplined and discipline our selves to the expectations of a discourse.

Foucault is helpful in theorizing how discourses function to solidify gender. Judith Butler's work on "gender trouble" uses this understanding of discourse to show that gender is unstable and must necessarily fail (1990). The necessary failure of gender exposes the noninnocent agenda of discourses like psychology and psychiatry that have a stake in producing notions of gender normality and gender deviance. A significant

proportion of theory and research on gender identity comes out of contemporary psychiatry and psychology exemplified in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV* (*DSM-IV*) manual. It should come as no surprise that psychological notions of gender normalcy and gender deviance have permeated educational discourse and practice since education emerged alongside psychiatry and psychology as one of the human science in the latter part of the 19th century. Cultural studies, poststructuralist feminist and queer studies have had little impact on educational discourse or practice.

In the first section of this paper, I introduce theories that have impacted on the understanding of gender in this culture and illustrate examples from the literature of how this understanding of gender has impacted gender nonconformist children. Following this, I turn to an account of Brandon Teena, the transgendered youth murdered for his perceived transgression followed by two narratives from my interviews with youth in Alberta. The theoretical renderings of gender provide a context within which to understand the discourses about gender that these young people negotiate. Many of these theories about 'correct' gender behavior are embedded in discourses of education, health, family, and popular culture. The theoretical accounts of gender take up a disproportionate part of this chapter in relation to the interviews because I want to demonstrate the relentlessness and heaviness of these discourses bearing down on the lives of these youth. Indeed, the relentlessness and heaviness of gender discourse informs all contemporary Western identity formations, albeit in differing ways from the formation of queer youth. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of queer identity-in-formation and a speculative section on rigid heterosexual identity-in-formation as gender melancholia.

Before proceeding, I want to say something about the discursive formation of identity and the material effects of discursive formations. Discursive formation arguments, like social constructionist arguments, are often dismissed as mere textual analysis whose preoccupation with language and discourse hijacks important discussion and analysis away from questions affecting the materiality of people's lives. This dismissal misses how language and discourse are fundamentally the site of every struggle. As Eve Sedgwick indicates, when a phrase like, it is "only culture", is invoked dismissively, the stubborn grip of discourse on lives is misunderstood (1990, p. 41).

Discursive formation of identity which, in part, posits that social factors or processes shape or formulate identity and subjectivity is indebted to the work of philosopher Frederic Nietzsche (1844-1900).

> There exists neither "spirit," nor reason, not thinking, nor consciousness, not soul, nor will, nor truth: all are fictions that are of no use. There is no question of "subject and object," but of a particular species of animal that can prosper only through a certain relative rightness; above all, regularity of its perceptions (so that it can accumulate experience)— Knowledge works as a tool of power. Hence it is plain that it increases with every increase of power. In order for a particular species to maintain itself and increase its power, its conception of reality must comprehend enough of the calculable and constant for it to base a scheme of behavior on it. The

> utility of preservation–not some abstract-theoretical need not to be deceived–stands as the motive behind the development of the organs of knowledge–they develop in such a way that their observations suffice for our preservation. (480 March-June 1967 [1888])

Nietzsche argued that prosperity for the human species comes about through the preservation of certain perceptions based on a sense of rightness and not some human essence prior to language and perception. Human experience accumulates because of this sense of rightness. However, the species is not unified in its perceptions. Other perceptions exist, grasping a different reality, even if not codified through systems of knowledge through which notions of experience accumulate.

While discursive formation theories argue against the possibility of a pre-discursive self, including a pre-discursive body, the materiality of the body is not denied nor are the material effects of language and discourse (Hall, 1997). Experiences of bodily pain, bodily skill, or embodied experiences of desire are material and 'real', yet each is produced in discourses that constitute the meaning of pain, skill, and normality. Insisting that bodies are discursively formed is to notice discourses that produce meaning about the body. What counts as biology and what is considered to be natural are produced from discourses that among other things differentiate species, demarcate culture, and instate taboos (Douglas, 1969; Haraway, 1989). While bodily experiences and therefore differences have a material reality, "biology by no means determines the content of these differences" (Henriques, 1994, p. 22). This is important to keep in mind when assessing theories of gender that, while acknowledging the "social construction" of gender behaviors, take for granted that what is known about bodies is prior to the social.

Discursive Identities: Gendering Identities

The construction of individual identity may be thought of as a series of interactions with discursive practices that solidify in the body. These discursive interactions are interiorized and sedimented as identity layered onto and within the singularity that is the human being. There is no innate core self that produces these interactions.[1] Gender is not a thing; rather it is an action or series of interactions that inflect human subjectivities. Gender is a pervasive discursive practice interacting with many other discursive practices that function to differentiate bodies, experiences and identity formation. It is more accurate to think of gender as gendering, a process that occurs through human interactions.

> Masculinity and femininity are inherently relational concepts, which have meaning in relation to each other, as a social demarcation and a cultural opposition. (Connell 1995, p. 44)

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[1] This does not deny the importance of the Lacanian essence of repressed desire that becomes internalized.

While conflicting, contradictory discursive practices shape a vast array of identities, dominant discourses of science, culture, health, education, families and so on posit gender as comprising just two categories: male-masculine-man and female-feminine-woman. These categories are regarded as dichotomous; masculinity is dominant, in cultural and symbolic terms and often practice, over the feminine. Each is defined, in part, by the notion that one is what it is, by virtue of not being the other.[2]

This dichotomy maintains another dichotomy between what have come to be understood as heterosexuality and homosexuality (Foucault, 1980b) which are also defined by virtue of what the other is not. To maintain the policed boundary between heterosexuality and homosexuality, gender relations are maintained through socially enforced codes of masculinity and femininity. The hierarchy of relations between homosexuality and heterosexuality then is an effect of dominant gender discursive practices, and the effects of heteronormativity are gender rigid behaviours. These violent hierarchies constitute and construct each other, doubling backward and forward in such a fashion that each produces and are the effects of the other.

Heteronormativity, manifested in rigid gender relations, has the added effect of disappearing the homosexual/queer. Indeed, much social science still attempts to understand gender in the context of heteronormativity. Studying the queer, or rather, the disappearance of the queer, in contemporary schooling, academic, and intellectual praxis is done in the face of "an endless capacity to marginalize queer sexuality in . . . descriptions of the social world" (Warner, 1994, p. ix). This paper, then, in part is a deconstructive study of gender and sexuality that explores the beyond of gender when a dichotomous understanding of gender is refused.

Gendered Subjects: Passive Girls/Active Boys

> Sugar and spice, everything nice...that is what little girls are made of.
> Snails and pails and puppy dog tails, that is what little boys are made of.

The importance of one's gender is so absolute that at birth the first category applied to a neonate is whether this being is a boy or girl. Indeed, so important is the ascription of gender that medical technologies have devised ways to label the sex/gender of the fetus prior to the event of birth. With the ascription of gender comes an array of behavioral 'observations' and expectations. Male neonates are perceived to be more physically active and alert. Female infants are seemingly more passive at and after birth. Just so there is no confusion in relation to the rather ambiguous bodies that most neonates have, in contemporary Canadian and many western mainstream cultures, females are colour coded with pink and boys with blue.

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[2] Rather than see these categories as dichotomies, Lacan, for example, regards them as antimonies.

The practice of eradicating inter-sexed babies attests to the strength of the necessity of gendering humans from birth. Infants born with ambiguous genitalia, known as inter-sexed babies, are subjected to surgical interventions to remedy the ambiguities of their bodies. Depending on what kind of external genitalia is present, a sex is assigned to the child and then surgical procedures are performed to match the infant's body to the assigned category (Hausman, 1995; Kessler, 1998). The very label "inter-sexed" attests to the stubborn grip of a two-sex system.

> [I]n the face of apparently incontrovertible evidence–infants born with some combination of 'female' and 'male' reproductive and sexual features–physicians hold onto an incorrigible belief in and insistence upon female and male as the only 'natural' options. (Hausman, 1995, p. 72)

As Hausman (1995) shows in her discourse analysis of medical, scientific, and narrative discourse on intersexed and transsexuality, the range of hormonal, gonadal, and chromosomal variation amongst intersexed babies defies the idea of two sexes. The imperative of two sex/genders requires that intersexed babies become male or female. The idea of the "best sex" for that baby is based on body morphology, most often on the size of an infant penis (Kessler, 1998), and based on a perceived psychological makeup which is derived from the work of Money (1968; 1972).

> After all, there can be no *true* sex if no single kind of sex (chromosomal, gonadal, hormonal, among others) can be invoked infallibly as the final indicator of sex identity (Hausman, 1995, pp. 78-9, emphasis in original)

The idea that "inter-sex" might actually be an indication of many other sexes and not just a third sex is not countenanced. Ambiguously-sexed bodies are disappeared at birth or shortly thereafter. Gendering discourse does its work from these early and influential moments. It is to the theory and research that contributes to the production of gender dimorphism that this section now turns.

Making Sexual Life Central: Freud & Psychoanalysis

> Freud's theory of the mind opens the way to a concept of sexuality and sexual difference which is alive to the body, aware of social relations, but sensitive to the importance of mental activities. As a result, psychoanalysis offers the possibility of seeing sexuality as more than the irrepressible instincts which wrack the body; it is a force that is actually constructed in the process of the entry into the domain of culture, language and meaning. (Weeks, 1985, pp. 127-28)

Sigmund Freud (1856-1923) was an influential intellectual and practitioner who recognized the centrality of gender, sex, and sexuality in human development, even if he left these categories unproblematized. One of the first theorists to understand gender

categories as constructed through a long and conflict-ridden process rather than fixed by nature, Sigmund Freud is not often considered a social constructionist. However, language was central for Freud and within one of his early works published in 1891, the human mind is defined as a "succession of inscriptions of signs" (Weeks, 1985, p. 129). Over the decades of his work, Freud was implicitly working out the precarious but complex construction of adult masculinity and to a lesser extent, femininity. His early, critical displacement of biology in the formation of gender and sexuality was an insight before its time but of great importance to understandings of gender, sex, and sexuality (Weeks, 1985).

The key moment for Freud is the "Oedipus complex," a time in adolescent development in which boys desire their mother and hate their father. The crisis arising from this complex is acted through a boy's rivalry with the father for the mother and the boy's terror of psychic not physical castration as a punishment. Freud contended that homosexuality was not a simple gender switch because many male "inverts" retain masculine dispositions. Rather than absolute masculine or feminine humans, Freud hypothesized that humans are bisexual with masculine and feminine characteristics coexisting in everyone. He further worked out, through his famous "Wolf Man" case, a pre-Oedipal narcissistic masculinity underpinning the Oedipus complex. This involved, among other things, desire for the father and jealousy of the mother. Clinical evidence to support a pre-Oedipal 'femininity' in boys as a result of identification with and jealousy of the mother, was forthcoming in the 1920s and 1930s as others took up Freud's theories.

For Freud, wishes and desires are central to the human experience of satisfaction and these are linked to memory traces of previous experiences of satisfaction which are fulfilled through reproduction of these former experiences. As well, Freud developed a structure of personality that included the unconscious formed in relation to the Oedipal crisis, by internalization of parental prohibitions that judge, censor, and present ideals, as well as a prompt to break the law. Through this structure of personality Freud, postulated the displacement of a unitary human consciousness. In other words, for Freud, "to be human is to be divided" (Weeks, 1985, p. 131). As important, Freud theorized that internalization of prohibitions occurred through a mechanism he called repression that is directed against sexual desires in particular. Thus for Freud, sexual desires and sexuality have a crucial role in psychical conflict and therefore personality. Significantly, Freud saw the super-ego as gendered (Connell, 1995) even if his ideas regarding masculinity and femininity were naturalized and unproblematized. While Freudian theory is radical in some important ways, Freud spent most of his life backing away from the radical potential in his earlier work and was unable to escape from the discursive hegemony of gender discourses.

Psychoanalysis after Freud

One of the most important early psychoanalysts to give Freud's theory a feminist turn was Karen Horney (1852-1952). In her paper entitled, "The dread of woman" (1932), she argued that fear of the mother is more energetically repressed and therefore deep-seated in boys and men than Freud's theory originally allowed. Choosing socially

inferior women and undermining women's self-respect to support "the ever precarious self-respect of the 'average man'" crystallized two important points for Horney (1932, p. 5). First, adult masculinity is premised on hyper-reactions to femininity and second, the forming of masculinity occurs with the subordination of women. Like Freud, Horney assumed that masculinity was aligned with male bodies and femininity with female bodies.

Another psychoanalyst, Alfred Adler (1870-1937), developed a theory of masculinity that posited that all children are weak in relation to adults and therefore inhabit a 'feminine' position in the family. He thought that through the course of 'normal' development a balance between masculinity and femininity is worked out (1956). Adler assumed that an adult feminine position, also assumed to be female, is a weaker one psychically and physically and he provided no explanation for why this was the case. For males, in Adler's view, any sense of weakness, any sense of inferiority either physical or otherwise, resulted in what Adler called "masculine protest." Masculine protest was an over-compensation in the direction of aggressiveness. Adler's theory, often ignored, has serious potential for exploring and pushing beyond masculinities and femininities even as his theory leaves the gender dichotomy intact and naturalized.

Erik Erikson (1902-1994), a second generation psychoanalytic theorist, moved in a different direction and developed the idea of ego identity. Erikson's work is still essential reading for developmental psychology and is influential in educational theory and practice. Ego identity has developed further into notions of core identity, in particular core gender identity. This is taken up more recently by Robert Stoller in his work on transgender people and 'gender identity disorder'. Both Erikson and Stoller reduce the radical potential of Freud's theory in general and the notion of gender contradiction in particular to a conservative and normalizing discourse (Connell, 1995, p. 15). I return to Stoller's work later in the chapter when I discuss 'gender identity disorders'.

Psychoanalyst and Marxist, Wilhelm Reich's (1897-1957) approach to gender was considerably more sophisticated than that of Freud, Erikson, or Stoller. Reich conceived that larger structures of authority, as these played out in family relations, were responsible for the production of class society and patriarchal relations (1970 [1933]). Reich did not see the kind of masculinity produced through these structures as problematic, however.

In contemporary times, Lacan (1901-1981) has pushed psychoanalytic theory to a focus on symbolic processes. Freud's model of psycho-dynamics in the family are taken up as constituting culture and the possibility of communication. Not an empirical fact, masculinity and femininity are instead, constructed through the Law of the Father, as the occupation of a place in the symbolic order and social relations (Lacan, 1977). For Lacan and Lacanian analysts, "the oedipal moment is the point at which the human animal enters the 'Symbolic Order', the order of language, a system of signification which positions the subject within a given structure of meaning organised (in accord with Lacan's adaptation of post-Saussaurian linguistics) around the recognition of difference" (Weeks, 1985, p. 143). The phallus is the prime transcendental signifier of difference and control of the conditions through which sexual relations are lived as the symbolic bearer of power. Males carry this power but this is changing. Thus the significance and effect of the resolution of the oedipal complex is the structuring of sexual difference necessary for cultural order (Lacan, 1977). A kind of quasi-determinism underpins Lacan because of

the universalism of the oedipal complex and this determinism saturates gender and sexuality as well.

Making Gender Central to Understanding Social Life: Feminist Critical Understandings

With the concern that human development in family life is fragile, psychoanalytic theory presented radical potential for disrupting gender categories. However, the concept of gender itself did not come under critical scrutiny. A dichotomous gender system remained intact as the ideal to be attained through the process of becoming an adult. This unproblematized approach to gender changed with the advent of feminist thinking. Philosopher, Simone de Beauvoir's (1908-1986) aphorism in *The Second Sex*, "one is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one" (1973, p. 301) provided an impetus for other thinkers to imagine that biology and behavior are not inextricably linked. Beauvoir observed that only the feminine gender is marked as a *sexed* being while man/masculine serves as the universal signifier for the human being. For de Beauvoir, the marking of the female as sexed is implicated in her status as Other; as the second sex.

For French feminist, Luce Irigaray, however, women are the sex which is unrepresentable, within a masculinist language. Woman, according to Irigaray, is a linguistic absence (1985). Woman is neither a subject nor the Other, since neither are possibilities for women within language that is phallogocentric or masculinist. French philosopher, Monique Wittig, argued that the category woman is conflated with "sex" so that gender is feminine while men are persons (1981). Thus gender and sex are aligned with the feminine while male subjectivity is non-gendered and non-sexed. Wittig called for the destruction of sex so that women may become universal, that is ungendered subjects.

Early sociologists viewed gender in terms of 'sex roles' thought to be a set of attitudes, motivations, and personalities that children learn so as to fit into adult feminine or masculine roles (Parsons, 1951). Feminist sex role theory was derived from the functionalist approach of Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) who distinguished between instrumental male roles and expressive female roles in the family (1951). In radical feminist theories, sex and gender were regarded as a system of women's oppression (MacKinnon, 1982). The sex-gender system, in this view, is deliberate and permeates all other social institutions including, for example, the law, organized religions, family, and mass media. With a different approach, Marxist feminists considered the gendered division of labour as simultaneously oppressive in the structuring of society (Hartmann, 1976; Barrett, 1980). More recent Marxist feminist theories incorporate ideological domination of women by men in both the family and workplace with the gendered division of labour (Walby, 1990). Those feminists of a psychoanalytic persuasion locate sex/gender as an idea of difference emerging from family relationships (Irigaray, 1985; Mitchell, 1975; Rubin, 1975) with mothering as particularly central in the construction of gender (Chodorow, 1978).

This range of scholarship has focussed on what is an extremely complicated and contested set of relations between those categorized as male or female. It is important that gender be more precisely and clearly conceptualized as "a more general term

encompassing all social relations that separate people into differentiated gendered statuses" (Lorber, 1994, p. 3). Thus Lorber writes further:

> I see gender as an institution that establishes patterns of expectations for individuals, orders the social processes of everyday life, is built into the major social organizations of society, such as the economy, ideology, the family, and politics, and is also an entity in and of itself. (1994, p. 1)

Lorber's call for clarity echoes other feminists writing within racial, ethnic, lesbian, and postcolonial perspectives (Anzaldua, 1987; hooks, 1984; Collins, 1990; de Lauretis, 1986; Lorde, 1984; Spivak, 1988; Williams, 1991) who indicate that gender, race, and social class inform a range of positionalities (Alcoff, 1988) within hierarchical and stratified systems differing across societies. The assumption that gender is a necessary *foundation* is still in place for Lorber, however. While the idea that gender relations can be and are different with other circumstances and organizing principles, the idea that gender need not be organized in a two-sex, two-gender system is not imagined in most contemporary feminist work. Descriptions of the lives that "women and girls" live tend to become descriptive and often prescriptive and serve as evidence for distinct gender categories.

Poststructuralist and queer feminists regard sexuality and gender as shifting, fluid categories implicated in discursively formed understandings of bodies, subjectivities, desire, and symbolic representation (Butler, 1990; Haraway, 1991; Flax, 1990; Garber, 1992; Rubin, 1993, Sedgwick, 1990). Understanding sexuality and gender as fluid shakes the solid grounding of a social order premised on a two-sex, two-gender system in which sexual desire is premised on attraction between opposites. Eve Sedgwick, for example, writes of the limitations that the sex-gender system has placed on understanding the notion of sexual orientation.

> It is a rather amazing fact that, of the very many dimensions along which the genital activity of one person can be differentiated from that of another (dimensions that include preference for certain acts, certain zones or sensations, certain physical types, a certain frequency, certain symbolic investments, certain relations of age or power, a certain species, a certain number of participants, etc. etc. etc.), precisely one, the gender of object choice, emerged from the turn of the century, and has remained, as the dimension denoted by the now ubiquitous category of "sexual orientation". (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 8)

As Sedgwick indicates in her first axiom: "people are different from each other" (1990, p. 8) and consequently each one of us retains the "potential to disrupt many forms of the available thinking about sexuality" (p. 25).

Processes of Normalization/Discipline: Foucault on Sexuality as Power Relations

Claims that knowledge is neutral or innocent are based on assumptions that there are "necessary connections between truth, knowledge, emancipation, and justice and that truth and force of domination are necessarily antinomies" (Flax, 1992, p. 457). Instead of neutral or innocent knowledge, truth and knowledge are the results of mutually accepted rules of discourse.

> Each discourse has its own distinctive set of rules or procedures that govern the production of what is to count as a meaningful or truthful statement . ...The rules of a discourse enable us to make certain sorts of statements and to make truth claims, but the same rules force us to remain within the system and to make only those statements that conform to these rules. A discourse as a whole cannot be true or false because truth is always contextual and rule dependent. (Flax, 1992, p. 452)

When a set of rules about what counts as truth predominates and competing discourses are not countenanced, the discourse these rules constitute functions as a "regime of truth." As Foucault indicated, a regime of truth is a power-knowledge nexus in which "power and knowledge directly imply one another....there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (1979, p. 27). By detailing networks or fields of power-knowledge in a number of social contexts (the asylum, the prison, the shop floor), Foucault understood modern power to be productive rather than merely repressive. Power, according to Foucault, can be understood as constraints that enable or inhibit action (Fraser, 1989, p. 20).

Through enabling and inhibiting effects of constraints, bodies become disciplined in a variety of ways (Foucault, 1979). Foucault's work on disciplinary power exercised in modern institutions such as hospitals, schools, prisons and asylums has provided detailed descriptions of how bodies are organized as docile bodies, that is bodies disciplined to a body of knowledge.

Discipline has a dual meaning for Foucault as both a body of knowledge and as social control. Foucault's work in *Discipline and Punish* (1979) documented how practices of controlling people develop as the subject matter or knowledge base of a discipline develops. In the discipline of education, for example, experts utilize knowledge generated by educational research and translate this information into ever more exacting technologies of intervention to produce disciplined and compliant students. By monitoring and examining the consequences of these disciplinary interventions, more knowledge (discipline) is produced which in turn makes control (discipline) even more meticulous.

Arguably gender is a discipline with its own set of norms and standards, techniques to exact conformity and experts who observe and judge, both in the human

sciences and in popular culture (Shogan, 1999). de Lauretis (1987) argues that "*gender*...both as representation and as self-representation, is the product of various social technologies, such as cinema, and of institutionalized discourses, epistemologies, and critical practices, as well as practices of daily life" (p. 2, emphasis added).

Disciplines establish standards of achievement, behaviour, or performance for specified tasks in relation to the physical and social spaces within which these can occur. Everyone engaged in or by a discipline is measured in relation to these standards and ranked in relation to each other. In the case of education, students' abilities or behaviours are assessed by teachers and other specialists who observe and judge students in relation to the standards established for the discipline. Observation and judgement by teachers are part of an examination process that produces information about an individual's placement in relation to the standards of the discipline and in relation to others. This information makes it possible to isolate individuals so that their weaknesses can be corrected. Participants are subjected to interventions designed by teachers in order to close the gap between the deficient skill or behaviour and that imposed by the standard. As Foucault (1979) indicated, examinations make it possible "to know them; to alter them" (p. 172). The examination is also central in influencing people to conform to gender standards and norms. The experts in the case of gender are ubiquitous: family, friends, church leaders, and teachers who observe and judge gendered behavior and intervene with rewards and punishments to exact conformity. There are also credentialed experts who, when consulted, use their institutional authority to utilize sophisticated techniques of behavior modification to normalize behavior.

In education, each student becomes more like other students as deviations from the standard are corrected and an individual's behaviour or skills come closer to the standard. Through repeated interventions, everyone is moved closer to the standard or norm. As I explore later when I turn to Judith Butler's work, this repetition of behavior and skills of gender comes to consolidate and solidify notions of normal, 'real' gender.

An effect of the examination is the production of information about how participants behave or perform in relation to standards and how they respond to corrective measures. This information contributes to the body of knowledge of the discipline and serves to reposition what counts as standard behaviors or skills for the discipline. Knowledge about individuals in relation to standards is also produced when participants in a discipline are required to talk about their experiences. In what Foucault refers to as the confessional, participants tell or perhaps write their experiences and an authority records the information along with his or her expert interpretation of the information. This is followed by an intervention "in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile . . . and [to] . . . produce . . . intrinsic modifications in the person who articulate[d] it (Foucault, 1980b, pp. 61-62).

In *The History of Sexuality: Volume I*, Foucault outlines how, through the confessional, sexuality has become identified with the whole truth about a person and therefore occupies a strategic site for the regulation of individuals and populations. Implicit in the confession is the assumption that individuals attain self-knowledge by confessing to experts who interpret the confession for them. It is also assumed that it is possible to improve the confessor by interventions designed to bring the individual closer

to standards for the discipline. The labeling of an individual as having a 'gender identity disorder', for example, is the result of observing and judging her or him in relation to gender norms but it is also a result of having the person talk to an expert who interprets this information according to the standards of the *DSM IV*. Those who confess their experiences of not being able to meet the standards of normalized gender are labelled 'disordered' by experts (*DSM IV*, 1994, p. 246).

Fiske notes that the more examinations we pass the more normal we become (1993, p. 75). Likewise, the more we confess, the more normal we become because, like the examination, the confessional entails interventions by experts to change individuals so that they meet the standards of a discipline. When the interventions are successful, normalization is a consequence. Normalization is an effect of the "constant pressure to conform to the same model, so that they might all be . . . like one another" (Foucault, 1979, p. 182).

To think of gender, sex, or sexuality, as neither a property of bodies nor naturally occurring in humans but as "the set of effects produced in bodies, behaviors, and social relations" through the deployment of a "complex political technology" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 27) is to move beyond Foucault's work in *The History of Sexuality: Volume I*. Foucault's work on male homo-sexuality, hysterical women, and masturbating children in this volume was only a beginning in accounting for differential effects of technologies of sex, sexuality, and gender on those constituted as female or male. Other processes of normalization like class, age, race, ethnicity, religion and ability are also critical to understanding contemporary gendered subjectivities. In order to further trouble the presumed coherency of sexed bodies, gendered behavior, sexual desire, and sexual practice, it is important to turn to the work of Judith Butler.

Judith Butler: Gender Performances

> Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a "*production*", which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation. This view problematises the very authority and authenticity to which the term, "cultural identity" lays claim. (Hall, 1990, p. 222, emphasis added)

For Judith Butler, gender is not simply a category of identity. Gender is a process of repetitive, performative acts. Gender, writes Butler is a "*corporeal style*, an 'act...which is both intentional and performative, where '*performative*' suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning" (1990, p. 139, emphasis in original). As a "*regulated process of repetition*" (Butler, 1990, p. 144, emphasis in orginal), gender is a disciplined effect of rule-governed discourses.

What comes to count as a male or female sexed body is a result of repetitive performances of gendered gestures, movements, and comportment. What counts or matters as sex is "materialized" by specific cultural processes or practices.

> What I would propose...is a return to the notion of matter, not as a site or surface but as *a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to* produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter. (Butler 1993, 10, emphasis in original)

Playing with the double meaning of "materialize" and "matter", Butler argues that, although bodies are material, it is important to notice which bodies "come to matter" in a culture (Butler 1993, 23).

> To "concede" the undeniability of "sex" or its materiality, is always to concede some version of "sex", some formation of "materiality"...What will and will not be included within the boundaries of "sex" will be set by a more or less tacit operation of exclusion. (Butler 1993, 10-11)

Gendered performances establish the boundaries of what are regarded as sexed bodies; hence Butler's assertion that gender and sex are not distinct categories.[3]

Gender performances produce particular notions of sexed bodies and notions of what count as sexual practice linked to these notions of sexed bodies. One is either heterosexually male or female. Normalized performances of femininity and masculinity produce what counts as sex and sexuality and standardize a notion of heterosexual culture as "the elemental form of human association, as the very model of intergender relations, as the indivisible basis of all community" (Warner, 1994, p. xxi).

While Butler makes a claim for the universality of gendering processes, she also makes clear that such a claim does not mean gender "operates in the same way or that it determines social life in some unilateral way cross-culturally" (1990, p. 76). Rather, gender "operates as a dominant framework within which social relations take place" (1990, p. 76) but resists universalizing claims because "distinct articulations of gender asymmetry" operate "in different cultural contexts" (1990, p. 35). Within a particular cultural context, what counts as proper gender performance becomes the normalized version of gender for that culture.

Since gendering is a process whose repetitious performances articulate with multiple, competing, contradictory discourses, gendering is open to intervention and resignification (Butler, 1990, p. 33). Indeed, as Butler indicates, gender necessarily fails. "[T]o be a good mother, to be a heterosexually desirable object, to be a fit worker, in sum, to signify a multiplicity of guarantees in response to a variety of different demands all at once....produces the possibility of a complex reconfiguration and redeployment" (Butler, 1990, p. 145). It is because of the necessary failure of gender that there is an

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[3] Within Lacanian psychoanalysis, the problem of collapsing sex into gender is the loss of the radical potential of desire as having no definable object. The question from psychoanalysis is, how much can you manipulate what remains impossible to know regarding sex. This is an issue that I do not take up in this work.

opportunity to vary the expected repetitions of gender and, as a consequence, push the boundaries of what counts as sexed bodies, sexual practice, and desire.

Feminist theorists prior to Butler took for granted the naturalness of gender as a category or assumed an agreed upon definition of gender and consequently their theories became part of the discourse about gender that produced gender normalcy as an effect. While well-intentioned feminist theories premised on a rigid, essential, and naturalized categories of gender, 'Woman', and sex, necessarily leave these foundational categories unproblematized. Still other disciplinary work, like that in psychology and social psychology, not only accept the naturalness of gender categories as foundational, some work in these disciplines psychopathologizes those whose gender ambiguous bodies and actions challenge the foundations of gender relations. This is done by positing the notion that there is a core gender identity, a fundamental sense of being male or female that exists as a separate stage "prior to, even conceivably independent of, any crystallization of sexual fantasy or sexual object choice" (Sedgwick, 1993, p. 158). As I outline in more detail in the next section, those who deviate from what is presumed to be their core gender identity, if subjected to experts in clinical psychology, may find themselves diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder.

Like Butler, most researchers in psychology consider sex and gender as the same concept but they do so for radically different reasons. Gender is regarded by many developmental and educational psychologists as "the outward manifestation and expression of maleness or femaleness in a social setting" (Rice, 1999, p. 167). Somewhat more nuanced but still reliant on a fixed notion of sex to which gender adheres is the idea that sex is "the biological status of being male or female" while gender, in contrast, refers to the social categories of male and female" (Arnett, 2000, p. 130). Evidence to prove the sex or biological distinctions between males and females are "the fact that males grow facial hair at puberty and females develop breasts" (Arnett, 2000, p. 130). Examples of gender roles are those of mothers and fathers. That girls might grow facial hair and boys might grow breasts is not countenanced and, by definition, only females can "mother".

Gender Identity Disorder

> It is my belief that by looking at what society pathologizes, we can see the clearest common denominator of what society demands of those of us who wish to be considered normal. It is also my belief that, although most children do not undergo formal gender training to the extremes . . . . almost every child receives this training informally, often at the hands of the most liberal of parents and teachers. (Burke, 1996, p. 4)

In *The History of Sexuality: Volume I*, Foucault used the term *scientia sexualis* to refer to systematic discourse in which the confession is transformed into science. *Scientia sexualis* focusses on the "rigorous analysis of every thought and action...related to pleasure...,which supposedly holds the key to individual mental and physical health and to social well-being" (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983, p. 176). Medicine, psychiatry, and

pedagogy produced sexual norms against which they were able to identify the hysterical woman, the masturbating child, and the sexual pervert. Scientific discourses of 'sexual perversion' produced 'the homosexual' as a species (Foucault, 1980b, p. 43). Through confessional technology of *scientia sexualis*, sexual behavior was classified as normal or pathological and "once a diagnosis of perversion was scientifically established, corrective technologies...could and must be applied" (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983, p. 173).

In the latter part of the twentieth century, *scientia sexualis* has produced an extensive codification of sexual disorders that is published alongside other 'disorders' in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), now in its fourth edition with mini revised editions filling in between major editions. The DSM initially listed homosexuality as a category of mental illness. In 1973, with increasing pressure from lesbians and gays and others, the elimination of homosexuality as a mental illness was sought by mental health practitioners. In 1980, homosexuality was removed as a category of mental illness from the DSM (Burke, 1996, p. 27). However, with the removal of homosexuality came a new category, Gender Identity Disorder. As indicated earlier, Gender Identity Disorder (GID) of Childhood is regarded as a "pathology involving the Core Gender Identity. . .consistent with one's biological sex" (Sedgwick, 1993, p. 158). A notion of GID relies on gender-constructivist research of John Money and Robert Stoller, so that "the *de*pathologization of an atypical sexual object-choice [is] yoked to the *new* pathologization of an atypical gender identification" (Sedgwick, 1993, p. 158, emphasis in original). The effect was to produce ever younger cases of psychopathology, which, while not explicitly stated, were linked to the risk of adult homosexuality. The following excerpt from the DSM-IV desk version is produced through the logic of gender discourses with the effect of producing gender pathologized bodies.

> A. A strong and persistent cross-gender identification (not merely a desire for any perceived cultural advantages of being the other sex).
> In children, the disturbance is manifested by four (or more) of the following:
> (1) repeatedly stated desire to be, or insistence that he or she is, the other sex
> (2) in boys, preference for cross-dressing or simulating female attire; in girls, insistence on wearing only stereotypical masculine clothing
> (3) strong and persistent preferences for cross-sex roles in make-believe play or persistent fantasies of being the other sex
> (4) strong preference for playmates of the other sex
> In adolescents and adults, the disturbance is manifested by symptoms such as a stated desire to be the other sex, frequent passing as the other sex, desire to live or be treated as the other sex, or the conviction that he or she has the typical feelings and reactions of the other sex.
> B. Persistent discomfort with his or her sex or sense of inappropriateness in the gender role of that sex.
> In children, the disturbance is manifested by any of the following: in boys, assertion that his penis or testes are disgusting or will disappear or

assertion that it would be better not to have a penis, or aversion toward rough-and-tumble play and rejection of male stereotypical toys, games, and activities; in girls, rejection of urinating in a sitting position, assertion that she has or will grow a penis, or assertion that she does not want to grow breasts or menstruate, or marked aversion toward normative feminine clothing.

In adolescents and adults, the disturbance is manifested by symptoms such as preoccupation with getting rid of primary and secondary sex characteristics (e.g., request for hormones, surgery, or other procedures to physically alter sexual characteristics to simulate the other sex) or belief that he or she was born the wrong sex.

C. The disturbance is not concurrent with a physical inter-sex condition.

D. The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. (*DSM-IV*, 1994, pp. 246-248).

Gender Identity Disorder is a relatively unknown category to those who do not work within clinical psychology and psychiatry. Yet, Canada is home to the largest GID institute in North America, the Clarke Institute in Toronto. Every major city in Canada has its own clinic, usually attached to a large, teaching hospital. According to free-lance researcher, Phyllis Burke, GID is a large and ever-expanding field of both psychiatric and psychological clinical practice (Burke, 1996). These clinics inform the narratives of many queer youth and function as context for the youth interviewed for this study. Before I get to their stories, I describe some of the 'cases' Phyllis Burke uncovered in her work. Burke tells the stories of children forced by parents and teachers to conform to gender standards.

Becky

Seven year old Becky, was identified by experts as having "female sexual identity disturbance" (Burke, 1996, p. 5) which became manifest as "deviant gender behaviour" (Rekers & Mead, 1979). What did Becky do to be pathologized in this way? Burke writes:

> Becky liked to stomp around with her pants tucked into her cowboy boots, and she refused to wear dresses. She liked basketball and climbing. . . .She likes to play with her toy walkie-talkies, rifle, dart game and marbles. She stood with her hands on her hips, fingers facing forward. She swung her arms, and took big, surefooted strides when she walked. (1996, p. 5).

The "cure" for Becky's 'disorder' consisted of one hundred and two sessions of behavior modification in the clinic and ninety-six sessions in her bedroom, including a bug-in-her ear device through which she was instructed about proper play with toys. She

was rewarded for playing with 'feminine sex-typed' toys and behavior and rejecting 'masculine sex-typed' toys and behavior. The year was 1978 and Becky's treatment was under the auspices of a new federally funded programme in the United States. Toys played with, assertiveness, rough-and-tumble play, confidence, and defiance combined with a lack of interest in appearance and typical girl behavior and toys are, according to DSM IV, hallmarks of female gender dysphoria. A telling infraction was the refusal to wear dresses (Burke, 1996; Scholinski, 1997).

As Burke indicates, "rather than being 'cured', Becky's self-esteem was destroyed" by constant monitoring. "Her . . . desires and feelings had been worn down, split off from her everyday world, only to become hidden within a secret and shamed place inside her. Becky valiantly strove for acceptance and to do what was necessary in the face of overwhelming odds. She wanted to earn back love, and if that meant choosing the pots and pans over the soft-ball mitt, so be it." (Burke, 1996, p. 19).

Rekers, Becky's psychiatrist, has stated that gender identity disorder can be determined by comparing a child with same-sex, same-aged peers in athletic skills such as throwing a ball and percentage of baskets made from the free throw line. As Burke, comments, "I . . . hate to think that a child's diagnosis of mental health . . . depend[s] on basketball shots made, or not made, from the free throw line" (1996, p. 205). Rekers still works in the area of GID and has written articles on identification, assessment and treatment of childhood gender problems; rationale for intervention in childhood gender problems; and descriptions of clinical and therapeutic interventions spanning the 1970 through to the 1990s (1981; 1990a; 1990b). His contribution to *scientia sexualis* has guided the work of other hundreds of workers in the areas of both research and clinical practice as well as earned tens of thousands of dollars towards funding research and clinical initiatives (Burke, 1996).

Kraig

At age five, Kraig, an anatomically normal male, became part of the "Feminine Project" at UCLA. This project was advertised widely into schools as well as on local television shows because a ready pool of feminine boys were required as research subjects for this new area of research. Kraig had the misfortune of having his mother watch a television show in which a colleague of Rekers, Green (1987), explained the phenomenon of the effeminate boy and how the UCLA project might help. Another man on the show explained that playing with dolls as a boy turns the boy into an adult homosexual. Kraig's mother became alarmed and began a year-long battle to convince Kraig's father that Kraig needed treatment. Finally, after an incident in which Kraig was putting his little sister's clothing on her stuffed animal, Kraig's father became angry and spanked Kraig, agreeing that Kraig needed therapy. Kraig's treatment began with a genital exam to ensure that he was unambiguously a biological male. Next, Kraig was sent to Rekers who began Kraig's ten-month behavioral programme. He was included in the GID because

> [Kraig] continually displayed pronounced feminine mannerisms, gestures, and gait, as well as exaggerated feminine inflection and

> feminine content of speech. He had a remarkable ability to mimic all the subtle feminine behaviors of an adult woman....He appeared to be very skilled at manipulating [his mother] to satisfy his feminine interests. (Burke, 1996, p. 35)

Because of these baseline behaviours, Kraig was believed to be at risk for "adult transsexualism, transvestism and some forms of homosexuality" but also at risk for "depression, arrest, trial and imprisonment in association with his possible future as a transsexual" (Burke, 1996, p. 34). Further reasons postulated for Kraig's treatment were that he would be scorned by his playmates and that it is easier to change the child than society (Rekers & Lovaas, 1974). His diagnosis was based, as well, on Kraig's parents remembering that Kraig once wore a shirt on his head, pretending he had long hair and that he engaged in some mop and towel play. One night he wore his father's t-shirt to bed and, upon catching his reflection in a mirror, decided he was wearing a dress. These occasions were taken as evidence that Kraig cross-dressed. Mostly, however, he would pick up a doll or play with teacups as easily as a car when he wanted to play with toys. At the centre of everyone's concern, however, was a fear of Kraig becoming an adult sexual deviant. While 1974 is many years ago, Rekers still refers to Kraig as a foundational case in his *Handbook of Child and Adolescent Sexual Problems* (1995). This handbook is still in use in both clinical and research settings investigating GID.

Stanley

In 1986, three-year old Stanley began treatment at the Psychoanalytic Institute in New York. Stanley was diagnosed with GID and for him and his family this meant analysis five times a week for five years. Stanley was treated because "he would have developed into an adult homosexual" (Haber, 1991, p. 107).

> [H]e liked kitchen toys, dolls and carriages. When he was two years old, he wanted to put on nail polish. He liked Cinderella, Wonder Woman and Princess Diana. He groomed and dressed dolls. He also had many childhood ailments, including sore throats, earaches, fevers and allergies. He received frequent allergy shots, and was on significant amounts of medication, which might explain why he "avoided sports" and rough-and-tumble play. (Burke, 1996, p. 100)

Stanley's greatest love was his grandfather, who lived with Stanley and his family and with whom he spent large amounts of time. After a short but serious illness, Stanley's grandfather died without returning home from hospital. This devastated young Stanley.

In his five-year analysis, Haber reported Stanley's behaviours in terms of his atypical gender behaviour and his future sexuality (Burke, 1996, p. 103). In keeping with psychoanalytic theories, Stanley was thought to be harbouring castration anxiety, defending against damage and loss of his mother, as well as loneliness. Stanley's

grandfather was suspect in Stanley's psychopathology as well. The grandfather was married to a "vital working woman" and did light house cleaning while his wife worked.

Technologies of Discipline: Measuring for Gender Dysphoria

> **Cross-dresser plans to switch to alternative school in Gresham, Oregon. A self-described "gay boy cross-dresser says he plans to transfer to an alternative school after being suspended for wearing women's clothes and a bra stuffed with socks. (*The Columbian*, May 5, 2000)**

An important area of research in GID is development of measurement tools. Several tests used to determine both gender dysphoria and the severity of this disorder are the Machover Figure-Drawing Test and IT Scale for Children. With the Machover Figure-Drawing Test, the child is given a piece of paper and asked to draw a person. If a girl draws a boy or a boy draws a girl they are considered to have gender problems. The IT Scale for Children is an exercise in which the child is shown a stick figure and is asked to pick appropriate toys, accessories and clothing from various cards for the stick figure. If the child makes masculine choices, the child gets points. If feminine choices are given, the child does not get any points. Girls are expected to score very low on this test while boys are expected to score high.

The Barlow Gender-Specific Motor Behaviour Form looks at body movements like sitting, standing and walking to determine normal masculine or feminine movements. Buttocks hold a special place in the Barlow Form: "if the distance between the buttocks and the back of the chair was four inches or more" points for masculinity are given (Burke, 1996, p. 8). Close proximity of buttocks to the back of a chair is scored as feminine. This test is based on a 7-point scale.

GID maintains its status as science through these test instruments which, in keeping with scientific principles, measure behaviours so as to provide consistent, reliable results. In their 1995 text, Zucker and Bradley outline, in detail, the numerous assessment and test instruments available to GID specialists. They comment "these assessment measures are the most readily accessible for clinical assessment....all have shown at least some discriminant validity; that is they have distinguished gender-referred children from normal, sibling and/or clinical controls" (1995, pp. 60-63). No doubt consistent, reliable results are obtained, but the foundational assumptions on which these are made are solidified and naturalized based on categories which are questionable. Assumptions about gender, sex, and sexuality, meanwhile, are left intact and unproblematized. The *scientia sexualis* of GID subjects children and youth to behaviour modification, drug therapy, shock therapy, and psychoanalysis with "severe" cases institutionalized, all in concerted effort to shift non-conforming behaviours towards gender appropriate performances (Burke, 1996; Scholinski, 1997). The technologies of surveillance and intervention employed in producing correct gender seriously compromise notions of gender as naturally occurring, even while relying on these notions.

Hyper-masculinity or hyper-femininity is considered a success even when these behaviors are socially inappropriate in most other circumstances. For example, treatment

is considered successful for feminine boys when "the boys become more verbally and physically aggressive toward their mothers" (Burke, 1996, p. 54). For 'gender-troubled' girls, makeup and a preoccupation with older males, who may be close family friends or part of the therapy team, are promoted by therapists as the pinnacle of successful treatment (Burke, 1996). It goes without saying that, in other circumstances, it would be problematic to encourage girls to sexualize their behavior with adult males, particularly those in a fiduciary relationship. For both girls and boys, disdain for the 'opposite' gender is a hallmark of appropriate behaviour, even while the very best outcome is that children and youth diagnosed with GID become gender appropriate heterosexual adults.

Theories and practices associated with Gender Identity Disorder solidified in the same period as the emergence of second wave feminism. As feminist thinking worked towards opening possibilities for girls and women and with the radical potential of liberating boys and men from their gender rigid roles, GID worked to reify and rigidify gender. Both, however, depended upon essentializing notions of gender. While feminist thinking has moved beyond essentializing gender, GID discourse proliferates increasingly fossilized theory, therapy, and research of rigid gender categories.

Often parents, especially mothers, grandparents, and other loved ones are blamed for gender inappropriate behaviours even though relatives most frequently turn children in for therapy, in the 'best' interests of the child. On other occasions, parents are not aware that their child is being treated for GID as this happens within a school setting with a teacher relying on outside assistance to 'contend' with gender dysphoric problems present in classrooms (Burke, 1996). The eradication of behaviours that might lead to later homosexuality is at the core of treatment for GID even as experts are uncertain about 'causes' or outcomes of GID. Zucker indicates, for example, that "we do not have any definitive studies that demonstrate one way or the other that treatment for GID in a child causes a heterosexual outcome or that cross-gender play in a child signals a homosexual childhood" (Zucker in Burke 1996, 100). Richard Green (1987), writing about the "sissy boy syndrome" and the development of homosexuality, supports psychological intervention with children not because these protect against homosexuality but because, he claims, parents have a legal right to seek treatment for gender dysphoric children and youth. Most chillingly, therapists Rekers and Lovass (1974a; 1974b) offer as their rationale for treatment in their case study of Kraig that it is easier to change the child rather than the society in which he lives.

The discourse of GID is often confusing and contradictory, informed as it is by both biological and social constructionist arguments. What is not confusing about GID discourse is the fear it perpetuates of children and youth growing up to be homosexual. This desire to eliminate homosexuality is not, of course, unique to experts of gender identity disorder. Even as parents claim to be amazed at the apparent ease with which their children conform to gender expectations, "something akin to gender terrorism aimed at children" operates to discipline children, youth, and all of us into gender conformity (Burke 1996, p. 125). When the influence of family, school, and friends fail, there are GID clinics to turn to, and, if therapeutic methods to 'cure' GID fail, there is the opportunity for sex reassignment surgeries.

Disciplinary Technologies: Beyond GID: Sex Reassignment Surgery

> To "make" a man is to test him: to "make" a woman is to have intercourse with her. Like the dissymmetry of reference in Spanish between a "public man" (a statesman) and a "public woman" (a whore), "making a man" and "making a woman" mean two very different things, culturally speaking." (Garber, 1989, p. 138)

In a technological twist on "making" gendered bodies, specialists in the surgical suite are another manifestation of the normalization of masculine male bodies and feminine female bodies. Through surgery and hormone therapies, a man can be made from a female body and a woman from a male body. When GID therapy is unable to "make" sissy-boys and tomboy-girls into gender appropriate persons, sex assignment surgery can make sissy-boys into women and tomboy-girls into men, thus succeeding in matching bodies with behaviours. Kessler and McKenna, writing in 1978, indicated that "genitals have turned out to be easier to change than gender identity. . . . we have witnessed . . . the triumph of the surgeons over the psychotherapists in the race to restore gender to an unambiguous reality" (p. 120). According to Shapiro (1991), transsexualism[4] is a fundamentalist approach to the relationship of sex and gender: "an inability to see an anatomical male as anything other than a man and an anatomical female as anything other than a woman" (1991, p. 252).

In Canada, the prerequisite for reassignment surgery is a diagnosis of GID. Otherwise, surgery is not insured through provincial health care and would be out of financial reach for most people. Sex reassignment surgery is not regarded as vanity surgery. "Gender dysphoria" is regarded as life threatening, requiring life-altering surgery. According to this logic, rooted in biological determinism, male brains are trapped in female bodies and female brains are trapped in male bodies. Judith Shapiro comments, "whatever the reasons for it, even if we cannot ultimately specify what causes it, individuals can simply be recategorized, which has the considerable advantage of leaving the two-category system intact" (Shapiro, 1991, p. 251). Those with suicidal tendencies or who are gender nonconformists are the most suitable candidates. Being suicidal is further evidence of psychopathology, while the social realities of homophobia and heterosexism are absent from analysis. Once again, it is easier to fix the individual, this time through radical surgical procedures, than it is to fix society.

Surgery to alter a body so that it lines up with the two-sex, two-gender, one sexual orientation system demonstrates how constructed gender and sexuality are. Or is this an instance of fixing up nature's little mistakes? Yet, 'nature' seems to be erring in ever increasing numbers, if the demand for "sex-reassignment" surgery can be taken as an indicator.. All too often transsexual surgery upholds the bipolar gender system by

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[4] For a psychoanalytic reading of transsexualism as a problem residing outside sex, see Sheperdson (1999).

encouraging assimilation and erasing difference (Mackenzie, 1994). And, of course, the body is not the only way, nor indeed an infallible way, in which persons become gendered. In fact, if we were naturally, essentially sexed, "sex-change" surgery should not, would not be necessary.

Disciplinary Technologies: "Sex Assignments" and The Case of the Intersexed

I introduced earlier the matter of intersexed infants and the surgery used to assign these babies to one of two sex-gender categories. Intersexed babies call into question the naturalness of maleness-masculinity and femaleness-femininity when surgical procedures are required *at birth* to assign unambigous gender to ambiguous bodies. As Kessler writes:

> [A]ccepting genital ambiguity as a natural option would require that physicians acknowledge that genital ambiguity is "corrected" not because it is threatening to the infants' life but because it is threatening to the infant's culture (Kessler, 1990, p. 32)

Ambiguous internal or external genitalia, chromosomes, or hormones are not life threatening. The assignment of a sex category to the intersexed baby occurs prior to most socialization even as the surgical procedures are effects of rigid social constructs. These surgical procedures reveal the rigidity of gender discursive practices, not the naturalness of gender categories.

What is clear from sex-reassignment surgery for infants or adults, is the attempt to alter bodies to match up to a two-sex, two-gender, one sexual orientation system. The implication is that, if one can achieve the correct body for one's brain, one will have the appropriate desires for the opposite sex/gender mate and for gender appropriate sexual performances. Discourses of wrong body/brain configurations assume that a brain that wants the same sex is displaying a behaviour, a desire belonging to the body of which the desiring brain is not part. Unfortunately for the credibility of this discourse, some of those transitioning still desire the 'wrong' sexual behaviours with the 'wrong' kind of people. Queer icon Pat Califia, former leather dyke, is now Patrick Rice-Califia, a female-to-male who is in the beginning stages of transitioning and contemplating marriage with a gay man. And, queer theorist, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, confuses categories when she identifies as a gay man (1993) and is married to a straight male academic. What can this mean in the context of a two sex, two gender, one sexual orientation system?

Rather than reflect the diverse and multiple ways of people acting and living in the social world, gender and related discourse misrepresents and distorts human life, producing bodies in such a way that some match rigid requirements while others are produced as defective, diseased, and mentally ill. The dangers to those who are pathologized are far greater than to those who are misrepresented, however. For some gender non-conformists, the penalty for 'deviance' is death.

When All Else Fails: Remembering Brandon Teena

Brandon Teena (formerly Teena Brandon) and two companions, a young single-parent woman and a young Black man, were murdered on New Years' Eve, 1993. On Christmas Eve, 1993, exactly one week prior to his[5] murder, Brandon Teena was brutally raped and assaulted by two former friends. The *Omaha Gazette*, in a sensational article titled "Dressed to Kill", proposed that male clothing worn by a female body was central to Brandon Teena's murder. Brandon Teena's clothing did have something to do with why he was murdered, but this is not the whole story. Brandon Teena's murder is a sign for how deeply troubled our society is over gender ambiguity and homosexuality.

As the previous section on GID conveys, many would go to extreme lengths to eradicate both gender ambiguity and homosexuality. GID clinics attempt to erase these behaviours through psychotherapies. Sex assignment of gender ambiguous infants eradicates "naturally" occurring ambiguous bodies. Sex re-assignment of adults is designed to alter 'mistakes' so that gender conformity is maintained. Taking the logic of gender rigidity to its logical conclusion, Brandon Teena's murderers erased gender ambiguity and the spectre of homosexuality through the elimination of Brandon Teena himself.

Teena Brandon was a sickly child who preferred to play with boys' toys and dress in shorts, jeans and shirts, unlike her ultra-feminine older sister. As Brandon Teena in his teen years, he successfully dated young women passing himself as male, offering further evidence within the discourse of gender conformity of psychopathology. Not only was he gender dysphoric, his passing as a male was an indication that he was a "pathological liar".

Brandon Teena's evasions or distortions about his body with most of his girlfriends varied after his earlier successes with girls. One of the young women Brandon Teena dated wrote that "he was a dream come true". At times he said that he was a hermaphrodite; other times he claimed that he was transitioning from female to male (ftm). The truth was that Brandon Teena was genitally female and could not afford surgery. When two male friends of his last girlfriend discovered Brandon Teena's secret, they raped and assaulted him in order to, in their words, "put her in her place" and beat him severely to ensure he did not press charges of rape and assault. The police officer who took Brandon Teena's "complaint" did not press charges and did nothing to protect him until it was too late. While Brandon Teena was evasive and often lied about many other things, his statement on public record, spoke a clear and unambiguous wish to press charges and go to court. After Brandon Teena tried to press charges, the two young men murdered him and two other people.

Brandon Teena's story displays, in graphic detail, the deep and widespread intolerance and hostility and individual and community inability in dealing with gender

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[5] In order to respect Brandon Teena's identification as male, I refer to Brandon Teena using masculine pronouns.

ambiguity and homosexuality. The community of Fall City[6], Nebraska is a microcosm of larger societal anxieties and confusions regarding these issues. The confusion, inability to deal with, intolerance and ambiguity spawned by gender rigid behaviours and attitudes is manifested at every stage of the authorities' interaction with Brandon. When his gender is uncovered by the police, they referred to Brandon Teena as "her" and used sexist language and assumptions while interrogating him during his complaint. Other examples demonstrate the very real structural problems that gender ambiguity creates. Brandon was 'outed' when he was placed in the female side of a jail. Dishonouring Brandon Teena's identification as male, court records used the wrong gender pronouns.

As documentary filmmakers Muska and Olafsdottir discovered during their four year investigation of the Brandon Teena story, the community in which the story unfolds is "more tolerant" of gender confusion but completely intolerant of the spectre and reality of homosexuality. The phrase "more tolerant" is dubious given the way the narrative unfolds. The filmmakers find that many people accepted Brandon Teena on a personal level because they thought no one else knew. However, once "it" became public knowledge complicity with Brandon Teena's secret was no longer possible.

Even as claims are made for a certain kind of tolerance towards gender ambiguity, the shallowness of that tolerance is unmasked when everyone knows and is forced to speculate about the link between gender ambiguity and what this means about others in relation to Brandon Teena. The closet of silence that shrouds gender ambiguity and its queer cousin homosexuality, keeping them privatized and personalized, could not tolerate the gaze and scrutiny of public knowledge. This is especially acute for those who felt strongly about their own gender conforming identities and sense of a heterosexual self. Brandon Teena posed a threat to all his girlfriends who denied they were lesbian when they had to acknowledge that Brandon Teena was a biological female. For most of the community this constituted homosexuality.

According to website information, Brandon Teena's last girlfriend, Lana Tisdale and another friend are still avoided and ostracised, as lesbian, within the community. Tisdale's friend, who is also Lotter's sister, never had any sexual contact with Brandon Teena but seemed to be guilty by association. In another twist, murderer Thomas Nissen was called a fag for raping Brandon Teena. According to his girlfriend, the threat to his sense of a masculine self because of this "pejorative" is one of the reasons he decided to murder Brandon Teena. His sense of masculinity had already been seriously threatened through previous prison time where he was repeatedly raped and abused by more masculine inmates. Raping Teena because Teena realistically presented as male to other town's people who then questioned Nissen's 'desire' in the rape and being raped in prison

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[6] It is perhaps ironic that "Fall City" carries such a name. Popular cultural representations of Brandon Teena's story are consumed by middle and upper class audiences while lower working class midwestern white Americans take the rap for bigotry and homophobia. This is another example of liberal displacement of bad behaviors onto those with less access to the social power in making films and the representations consumed through this medium. While Fall City is culpable in what happened to Brandon Teena, so too is the heterosexist and homophobic society of which Fall City is only one small part.

by other males, seriously threatened Nissen's sense of his gender. For the community, the threat posed by the spectre of homosexuality and ambiguously gendered females and males is so great they are still in denial and refuse any responsibility.

The threats to social norms and one's intimate sense of identity are so great for some that appropriate remedies are radical and horrific actions. Being a man is making a woman by taking her sexually, even if the murderers take Brandon Teena against his will. Yet, Brandon Teena is a better man than these two because he pleases his female partners while the murderers' relationships with women are weak and troubled or forced sexual relations. Brandon Teena's murderers are fighting, hurting, drinking, male-bonded and autocratic in their beliefs regarding gender and sexuality. So too was Brandon Teena as he successfully performed and out-performed them in many of the things related to masculinity. His murderers' sense of themselves was profoundly disturbed when they realized that the guy they let into their guy zone was, in their view, not really a guy. Everyone else, including Tisdale's mother, was fooled as well. The community of Little Falls was hoodwinked as effectively as Brandon Teena's previous girlfriends. None of them were as able to discern the 'real' men. They were vulnerable to the enemy--those who pose successfully as men and therefore undermine 'real' men. A normal man, vulnerable to an enemy, has to be brave enough to seek out and encounter the enemy in what might become a struggle for life or death. The struggle to maintain gender social norms was a death struggle in Brandon Teena's case.

The extreme homophobia of the murderers and the community towards Brandon Teena was acted upon through his execution. Eradicating Brandon Teena had the immediate effect of removing the threat posed by his body. Killing Brandon Teena restored balance to the murderers' sense of a masculine self and to an anxious and distressed community as well. Equilibrium for all was restored with the death of the gender/sexual deviant. Yet, the community continues its struggle with the events of Brandon Teena's life and death.

The flimsiness of conventional gendered identity and sexual practice was exemplified by Hillary Swank's performance as Brandon Teena in the movie, *Boys Don't Cry,* and her subsequent performance as a conventionally feminine woman when she received her Oscar award for best 'actress'. Hilary Swank's movie performance of Brandon Teena and her performance at the Academy Award ceremony reveal the performativity of gender while also consolidating the commonsense notion that both Brandon Teena and Hilary Swank have a 'real' gender behind the performance of masculinity.

Gender violators are variously punished, criminalized, psychopathologized or, in the case of Brandon Teena, disappeared from public site/sight through murder. In the words of Burke (1996), gender terrorism disciplines the majority of people into conforming behaviour. Those who mostly get it 'right' have an easier time forgetting the processes of gendering they were subjected to and come to believe they were born that way. Those who are different in childhood and adolescence may be subjected to a diagnosis of GID and concomitant therapies to eliminate gender inappropriate behaviours and, if 'successful', adult homosexuality.

Verbal and physical threats operate to discipline those unruly enough to "flaunt" their deviancy. For adult homosexuals, "reparative therapy" can be undertaken that purports to transform homosexuals into former or recovering homosexuals (Nicolosi, 1991). If this treatment fails, reassignment surgeries are available so that bodies and gender appropriate behaviours match. Finally, in order to maintain the myth of heteronormative hegemony, mutilation and execution of gender ambiguous/queer persons effectively disappears them from the body politic.

Even as heteronormativity appears to be a totalizing system, there are many interstitial spaces and cracks in the essentializing foundations of gender performances. Working, living, and breathing life into and in these spaces, queer bodies proliferate in spite of the relentless discourses of gender conformity. It is to some of these spaces I turn with narratives framed by my interviews with queer youth in Alberta schools. These youth are subjected to the heaviness of the discourses of gender that insist on a coherency of bodies, behavior, and sexual practice, yet they have found spaces in which to trouble the demands of conventional gendered identities.

True Stories I: The Case of the "Queer Young Dyke"

The early years of Jill's life were spent on a First Nations' reserve close to a large city. Jill was the eldest of six children and often spent time taking care of her younger siblings, making sure they were cared for when her parents were not available. Often, Jill had to defend herself and her siblings and by age six was a highly skilled fighter because she was in fist fights with other kids she described as bullies. Jill started school on the reserve and recalled liking school. However, she missed most of grade one because she took care of her younger siblings. Sometimes her "uncle" would look after them as well. On one of these occasions, her uncle raped her. Jill's father died in hospital when she was seven years old. Her mother died about two years later. Jill and her siblings were separated in foster care with Jill and one of her younger brothers going to the same foster home far away from their birth home and extended family.

Jill's foster family were a boisterous and engaging group and both she and her brother quickly fit in. However, Jill was stigmatized in school as a "Native" in foster care. School professionals labelled her as incapable of learning and tried to place her in classes far below her achievement level throughout her school years. She was also labelled as difficult and disruptive. Her foster and later adoptive mother was a strong advocate on Jill's behalf and challenged the assessment of Jill's learning abilities. However, she was unable to overcome her own and the school's assessment of Jill's "unfeminine" behaviour. Jill's love of rough and tumble play which, "in psychological terminology, is the hallmark of the male child" (Burke 1996, p. 5), identified Jill as a gender nonconformist. Jill reported that teachers were all

> . . .weird about me . . . they did not really like me and were afraid of my behaviours especially when I did not act like a proper girl. I didn't even know how to act like a proper girl!

I asked Jill how she knew the teacher's were uneasy about her non-feminine behaviour and she told me that they told her to act more like a girl. Meanwhile, Jill's adoptive mother admonished her to act like a girl, keep herself clean and tidy, and wear dresses more often. She also counselled Jill to talk 'like a girl.' As Jill demonstrated for me, this was to be accomplished by raising the pitch of one's voice, something she still had to work at years later during our interviews. Jill reported to me that she had reasoned with her foster/adoptive mother, that she could not do the activities she loved if she was wearing dresses. These activities included, "basketball, soccer, and climbing trees and, oh yes, I loved fighting." Jill felt she had to fight as she and her brother were constantly teased because they were in foster care, they were "native" and their last name was the name of an animal. Jill won all of the fights because she was not afraid, was highly skilled, and was a big kid compared to those she fought. Not only were some of her teachers "weird" about her, Jill stated

> . . .some of them were afraid of me, I think because of my fighting but also because I was too big and they thought I was stupid....some of the kids called me a stupid squaw but I think some of the teachers felt the same way.

When she turned nine years old, Jill was adopted by her foster parents and her last name changed. Jill said, "I was thrilled because no one could make fun of my last name anymore but I still had to fight all the time about other things." Still, life was secure and Jill loved her adoptive mother because she fought school teachers and counsellors, even a principal, on behalf of Jill and the other children in the foster home. Through her adoptive mother's influence, Jill worked hard at school and, while never an outstanding student, progressed through grade school. Her adoptive mother provided Jill with love, care, security and the protection that Jill needed. The only point of contention between Jill and her foster mother was over her tomboyism as

> she was always on my case about being more like a girl....staying clean, wearing these dresses she bought, stop playing ball...but she really liked me, she adopted me and loved me; that's all that mattered.

Jill's adoptive mother worried that Jill's behaviours would get Jill into trouble at school and later on in life because, she advised Jill, Jill would not know her proper place. Jill's adoptive father did not figure in her narrative.

At one point, two fourteen year old boys and a fifteen year old girl were placed as foster children in her home. Jill, age thirteen, was drawn into a mini gang formed by these three and herself. For about six months, they did everything together. One night, one of the boys went into Jill's room and raped her. Jill tried to tell her adoptive mother who told her "to please not tell her this thing, she could not bear hearing this stuff." However,

the boy was quickly removed from the home and the gang fell apart with everyone blaming Jill. Around this time, Jill's adoptive mother was becoming very religious in what Jill described as a "very Christian church, not one of your regular ones but one of those alliance ones or something." Increasingly, Jill's adoptive mother put pressure on all the kids in her care to attend church. She became more fervent in trying to get Jill to act like a girl and started telling Jill that she would never tolerate her if she was bad and wanted to be with other girls.

Around age twelve or so, over a two year period, Jill became increasingly aware of her attraction to other girls. She still preferred to play and fight with the boys but "I wanted to kiss and hug with the girls, especially the really cute ones." The cute girls, for Jill, were the ones who were physically active and smart. She tried to tell her adoptive mother about this attraction on many occasions but, as with the rape, her adoptive mother said she could not bear to hear what Jill wanted to tell her. Jill became increasingly agitated about this. "I love my mother," Jill said, "I wanted her to know about who I really am and I did not want to lie to her or mislead her because she saved me." Jill knew this was a highly contentious issue but also knew that this is "who I am." Jill was fourteen and a half when she came out to her adoptive mother. Her adoptive mother packed Jill's bags when she went to school the next day and put them on the doorstep. Jill was not allowed in the house after that. Jill was forced into state care where " I had to fend for myself, I was alone again . . . I had lost my second mother." Not only was Jill refused entry into what had been her home, her adoptive mother refused to see her and would not let her make contact with her younger brother because "she said I was a bad influence."

Over the next few years Jill became increasingly alienated at school. She was constantly in fights and flunked out. Her social workers and counsellors at school did not know what to do with her. Teachers and students were either indifferent, afraid, or actively harassed her. Some teachers refused to have her in their classes while students called her queer, a bull-dyke or a lezzie. Others gave her a wide berth in the hallways or refused to sit close to her in class. Jill hated school and quit attending on a regular basis. She was transferred from one school to another as a problem student. One incident in one high school stands out in relief against the constant harassment and marginalization she felt at the others. Some kids ganged up on Jill after school and wanted to beat her up. Jill got away and reported the incident and perpetrators to a school counsellor. The school counsellor advocated on Jill's behalf and ensured that the perpetrators were disciplined. Jill could not remember any other positive incidents from the years after she was kicked out of her adoptive home.

She attempted suicide several times and landed in a psychiatric ward. The attending psychiatrist referred Jill to another psychiatrist who was in charge of a programme specializing in individuals whose troubles were perceived to arise from confusion about gender identity. During counselling, over a period of several months, the psychiatrist convinced Jill that she had "a male brain stuck in a female body" and that, through a process of surgery and hormone treatments, this disjunction could be fixed. The psychiatrist told Jill, "that all of my problems were because of this male brain thing."

At first Jill went along with the psychiatrist but in a feat of bravery, Jill was able to reject the starched white authority of *scientia sexualis* (Foucault, 1980b) that, in addition to schools and family, have such a central place in the production of gender appropriate bodies. At the ninth hour, Jill refused to begin hormone treatments and instead insisted she was not confused about her gender. Rather, as she said, she was a "queer dyke." Jill was released from this programme back into alternative state care.

From the time she was kicked out of home until the time of our interview, Jill increasingly experienced great personal turmoil. State care was in the form of residential group homes but with her suicide attempts and other misdemeanours like fighting and theft, Jill was in and out of lock up facilities. In one facility, Jill was playing basketball with other girls in the gym and one girl accused Jill of feeling her up during a physically close moment, yelling that Jill "was nothing but a stupid dyke, keep your hands off me." Jill punched the girl in the face, breaking her nose and knocking out one of her teeth. Jill was disciplined for fighting. The other girl did not receive any censuring and thus, Jill was effectively disciplined for inappropriate gender and sexual behaviour as well, even though Jill denied any sexual intention in her actions.

> I was just playing basketball and sometimes you touch the other players during intense play...there was nothing sexual about it, as a matter of fact I hated her guts before that and loved pasting her in the face.

Jill did not complete high school. She reported to me that she has been raped at least once a year since her uncle raped her and had come to expect this would happen at some time or another every year. She was matter of fact about this. Jill also reported that she was beaten up regularly because she is so "butch" looking. She fought back and gave as good as she got, according to Jill. She also confessed to attempting suicide on at least nine separate occasions. Several of these attempts occurred in the lockup facility where she received counselling and after one attempt was referred to the psychiatrist knowledgeable in GID.

At the time of our interviews, Jill worked security for a small local company. She was in a committed relationship with Ellen, another young woman her age who had dropped out of school as well. Ellen was estranged from her birth family and did not work. Ellen took care of Jill emotionally as both agreed in a joint interview that Jill was fragile. Ellen had pulled Jill out of her suicide attempts on several occasions and these were unreported.

Jill missed her siblings and tried reconnecting with her extended birth family and visited her father's grave on the reserve. She was angry at her birth mother for dying but dreamed about her constantly. She missed her adoptive mother "dreadfully" and tried to reconcile with her repeatedly, with no success. The last time Jill phoned, her adoptive mother did not recognize her voice. This devastated Jill. Her adoptive mother told Jill that she did not want to see her until Jill gave up her 'lifestyle' and started acting like a girl. In Jill's words,

I still don't know how to act like a girl, I can't do it, acting like a girl is not who I am, I can't wear a dress or talk differently. Yet, I am a girl.

True Stories II: The Case of Jack, The "Sissy-Fag Queer"

He came home one day and asked me, 'What is gay? Some boys said I am gay'". . . . they put him in a headlock, dragged him down a deserted concrete stairway, then sliced wildly at his leg, severing his femoral artery. *Edmonton Journal*, Dec. 7, 2000.

What I wish I'd told that B.C. teenager who killed himself over 'fag' taunts. He'd been called "geek" because he had good grades, "four eyes" because he wore glasses and "fag" because he had a high voice and liked the company of girls. *The Toronto Star*, April 2, 2000, F7.

Jack remembered his schooling and growing-up years as a continuous struggle to hide from others the knowledge that he was different. Jack passed as white although he is Metis from a two parent, middle class family. He had one older sister whom he adored with all his heart. "She was so perfect, so beautiful, so much my very most favourite person...next to my mother of course," Jack told me. He loved "my little ponies" and his younger girl cousins. He had a large stuffed animal collection that his mother and aunt indulged him in. Jack knew to hide his toy preferences during his first year of school. He was physically quite active and thin and wiry at this time. Although he preferred girls and girls toys, he also loved to play games outside and ride his bike.

Jack's first year of school was traumatic. During the fall, his beloved older sister was killed in a car accident on her sixteenth birthday. For Jack and his mother, the ensuing two years were extremely difficult as they tried to live without his sister. Jack still mourns her loss and finds the fall, with its smell of decaying leaves, a very emotionally difficult time of year. Jack's father has work which keeps him away from home for long stretches of time and Jack rarely mentions him.

Jack missed a significant amount of school during grade one as a result of his sister's death. Jack and his mother would sleep in on school days and his mother would not make him go late. She seemed tired and distant during this time and spent most of her time in his sister's bedroom. The result was that Jack's grade one marks were poor and he was held back while his cohort group of friends moves onto grade two. Jack felt like he never fit in after that. He recalled that he was not invited to birthday parties or other after school events. His former classmates made fun of him because he was "stupid." From grade two to the end of grade five, Jack became a bully. He was given two and three day detentions for hitting other kids. He hit one kid over the head with a bicycle chain. The other kid required five stitches. Jack also put on weight at this time.

He did not want to go anywhere and withdrew into his house with his mother. He continued to gain weight and beat on other kids. None of his teachers asked him why he hit other kids but if they had, Jack would have said that it was because they teased him about his weight. As well, Jack did not tell anyone that he was called names like "faggot" from a very young age and would beat up other kids for this as well. The name-calling puzzled Jack because he worked hard to keep his love of what he calls girls' toys a secret.

Over the years Jack and his mother kept his sister's room intact, a shrine to her. When Jack was stressed he went to her room and played with and looked at her belongings, wishing she was alive. He also took his stuffed animals and little ponies into her room and played with them there. Jack felt safe in her room. His mother, as Jack recalls, remained withdrawn and depressed throughout his grade school. She did defend him from neighbours and teachers when he was accused of being a bully. Towards the end of grade five, Jack ended his bully stage and decided that he was going to excel at school. He had gained even more weight and described himself as "a fatso, that was me...I ate and ate and ate all the time, no one stopped me." Since his sister's death, he spent increasing amounts of time alone in a more and more sedentary way and spent long hours studying. Jack was able to excel because he had few friends and once school was out, "I spent little time with any of my peers, oh I would walk part way home with some of them." His alienation from friends was related to being left behind in grade one, feeling older than his new cohort group, and the name-calling and other harassment he experienced. He liked things that most of his male cohorts would not approve of so he kept "that part of me silent, out of the picture," yet Jack was harassed for being different. By the end of grade six Jack was the top honour student in his class and had taken on all kinds of extra-curricular activities as well because "I wanted all the awards, it was not enough to just be the honour student, I wanted to be the best in everything."

Jack knew that most of his teachers were uncomfortable with him. At first, he related this to the fact he was a bully and that his sister had died. Then Jack thought teacher discomfort was related to the fact he was "a fat kid." Since he kept his like of playing with girls and girl's toys secret, he did not think the teachers knew about this difference. It was not until grade six that he became aware of another dimension to his difference, a "really serious" difference. At this point, Jack determined that teacher discomfort was because he was fat and because he was "showing". "Showing" for Jack meant that others could tell he was different because he liked boys "that way." "That way", for Jack, included kissing boys and living with them in the same house. Yet, Jack played mostly, when he did play, with his girl cousins. "Showing" was also related to the way he walked and talked which Jack thought were very feminine. By feminine, Jack meant that he kept his arms tucked close to his sides; he used his hands to emphasize what he was saying; and he would "mince along" in smallish steps. Jack demonstrated his showing ways for me and the way he walked when he needed to disguise himself. His voice was too feminine, "girlie like", as well. Jack demonstrated a "girlie like" voice for me, telling me "that I knew what he meant."

During grade six, Jack fell in love with his music teacher, an attractive thirty-year old man. Jack stared at this teacher whenever the opportunity arose but was increasingly

afraid that his difference was showing more because of this action. Jack said he knew to keep this difference a secret because no one would approve. Even so, he felt the teachers did not approve of him because they knew his secret and in spite of his academic achievements. While he worked at not showing, other students knew because they called him names.

One teacher stood out for Jack. In grade seven, Jack discovered that he liked dancing and the teacher, a woman, encouraged him and complimented him on his grace as a dancer. Jack was thrilled and worked hard at dancing. Unfortunately, Jack was made fun of by the other students because boys were supposed to hate dancing. Nevertheless, the teacher's approval was a high point in Jack's school years and interactions with teachers. The following year, grade seven, a group of boys pulled Jack's pants down to his ankles while he was getting his books from his locker and they whispered "fag-got" at him. Up until this time, Jack wore jogging pants because they fit. Jack made his mother go out with him and buy two pair of jeans and never wore jogging pants again. This incident was a horrific one for Jack and, as he told me about it, the shame and anger surfaced again.

> I was so ashamed because I was so fat....I felt myself turning bright red as I pulled my pants up and looked around to see if anyone else noticed. Afterwards, I was enraged at not being able to say or do anything back. I am still emotional about this incident five years later.

Jack worked harder at "not showing" and losing weight as he now knew what faggot meant and that others would make him miserable because "I realized I was one" and that others despised me because of this.

Jack was a top honour student in his class up until grade eleven, yet mostly his teachers avoided him. A grade nine teacher physically moved back whenever Jack approached him leaving Jack feeling "unwanted and repulsive." As Jack says, "he made it clear that he had to acknowledge that I was at the top of the class but that he didn't have to do anything beyond that even though he made a big deal of inviting and including other students into his inner circle. Oh, he made it clear that he did not like me."

The lowest point in Jack's school years came in grade ten. Jack had to take physical education and found himself in a class with most of the members of the high school football team. They all seemed to hang around together and gave him funny looks. He was "terrified of showing...I did not want those guys to know about me." Also Jack was working hard at losing weight but was still overweight and out of shape. Being in the gym with the football team made Jack so nervous that "I broke into a sweat just thinking about phys. ed. and, in the class, I sweated buckets . . . . so much that I was constantly mopping my face and my armpits were soaked down to my waist...it was embarrassing!"

One day, several weeks into the term, Jack found himself in the boys' washroom with the football captain, a particularly scary person for Jack. Jack says this guy

> talked in a gruff voice and gave me looks that made me feel small and foolish and very afraid like he was going to smash me in the face if I said or did anything....I was scared, I just kept thinking oh oh, oh oh...I'm in trouble now.

Jack hurried into the bathroom stall as using the urinal was not an option, and slammed the door shut. When Jack came out of the bathroom stall, he quickly ran his hands under the tap water in the sink and smoothed his hair back so he could make a quick escape. Jack reported that as he was retreating, the football captain roared out, "what do you think you're doing?" Jack replied, "me-ee? what do you mean?" The football captain roared again, "you haven't washed your hands properly." Jack responded, "oh, whatever" and raced out of the washroom.

The next gym class involved learning the rules for and playing basketball and, when Jack passed the ball to his classmates, several of them could not seem to catch the ball. It was subtle at first but over the course of several classes more and more of his classmates would not catch the ball and whispered when game play stopped. Jack heard them saying they would not catch the ball because Jack's unwashed hands "contaminated" the ball. With each class, Jack felt that everyone was focussed even more on him and he began sweating more profusely. Some of the young men made a point of staring at Jack's armpits and most of them began to avoid standing anywhere close to Jack. Comments about his profuse sweating, the contaminated ball and "one of those" circulated in whispers, loud enough for Jack to hear.

Jack was devastated because he worked hard to ensure that no one knew his secret and he worked against his own "inclinations" to prevent "showing." Inclinations for Jack, meant the way he walked, gestured, talked and sat. By this time, Jack was desperate to get out of the phys ed class and went to the school counsellor who advised him to talk to his mother because it was not a good idea to drop any course given his outstanding academic record. He talked to his mother who said whatever he wanted was alright with her. Jack was not out to his mother, he thought, or to anyone else. Jack went back to the counsellor who wanted to know why Jack wished to drop the class. Jack was increasingly desperate and refused to answer that question with more than a "because" and quit attending classes.

Finally the counsellor contacted the gym teacher who was also the coach for the football team. The gym teacher/coach went back to the class and chastised the students for discriminating against "someone like Jack." The gym teacher contacted Jack and told him what he had done. Jack was even more devastated for being singled out in this way and because the gym teacher did not ask him if this was appropriate. Jack felt he had been outed with no input as to if, how or when this would happen. To top this, the gym teacher's advice to him was "don't let them get you down and get back to class and face them like a man ...otherwise you will be a wimp for the rest of your life." Jack refused to go back to this class and negotiated a reduced mark instead. He spent the following high school years avoiding members of the football team, his former classmates. His high-

school was large enough that ducking into rooms and turning his head away seemed to accomplish this.

Jack spent a huge amount of time and energy being vigilante because he never felt safe; "there were some ten of them in the class and chances of me coming across at least one of them everyday were enormous and besides, they were always together, so no matter what the counsellor or teacher said, I did not trust them and always felt afraid they would do something else to embarrass me or try to make me fight. I never felt safe."

In grade eleven, Jack found a friend, a young woman who he came out to. She was respectful and encouraging. He came out to his mother next who advised him that she already knew and was okay with this as she loved him "just the way I am." Because Jack had found a friend he did not put as much into his school-work; his time was spent elsewhere. "I was thrilled; this was my first real friend ever and I could tell her anything. I was afraid of losing her friendship but now I have lots of friends, many of them girls because they seem to be more understanding." Jack began volunteering at the local HIV/AIDS centre as well and found community took him further away from school-work.

> School just began to feel so irrelevant to my life. I was teased and harassed. I was afraid most of the time. Teachers did not like or respect me even when I had great marks. I never learned anything about myself that was useful. When I found my best friend, even getting good marks was not important. I contemplated dropping out of school.

Schooling was a constant struggle for Jack as he worked hard to control "showing" as well as keep himself safe. Even though he became a model student through his marks and other good student activities, little at school alleviated his sense of alienation and isolation until he found a friend in grade eleven. He remembered observing the ways in which other boys were teased because they did not fit in and looked for reasons for his difference in the loss of his sister, and his weight because he was afraid to be like other boys who were teased. Yet he was one of those boys as the constant teasing he received attested. Jack's knowledge of himself as a "sissy" became more apparent with time as he came to know this was the "absolutely wrong thing to be in school if you were a boy... I knew I was not a normal boy, but I could not help myself... most of the time for being a sissy-fag, hey that's what I am...that's what I was, even if school, teachers, other kids, whoever....made sure I knew this was wrong, wrong, wrong."

Polymorphous Genders: Queer Identities In Formation Queer Youth

Accepting Parents Lose Transchild, Monday August 28, 2000, Franklin County, Ohio. A first-grader has known she was female since she was 2, but her parents' willingness to face it has spurred county officials to take her out of their custody....Children Services acted in response to an August

11 telephone call from a person not publicly named; its timing may reflect the parents' attempt to enroll their child in first grade as a girl at the McVay Elementary School she'd attended as a boy the previous year. However, Children Services has been following the family at least since February because the child, the mother and possibly the father have mental health issues.

The relentless pursuit of a rigid two sex, two gender, one sexual orientation system continues into this new century. Yet, resistance to dominant discursive practices surface with a frequency not possible ten, twenty, or even thirty years ago. Feminist theories of gender have morphed in troubling and complicated ways into queer theories. The explosion of discourse around queer sexualities has greatly facilitated surfacing subjugated knowledges of sexual and gender orientations. Intersexed infants and queer transsexuals are evidence of the fact of polymorphous sexes. Queer youth and queer transgenders are evidence of the fact of polymorphous genders. These categories are testament to Freud's notion of polymorphous sexuality, not as a stage or phase we all pass through, but better understood as a range of sexual possibilities in which humans may engage. Even as polymorphous sexuality is alive and resisting, resistance is always in relation to dominating and dominant discourses. The two cases of queer youth presented here, demonstrate how each young person performed in relation to the rigid structuring of gender discourse. Each was hailed by gender discourse yet, each responded to this call differently from gender conformists. They refused the liberal and dominant demand of making themselves identical to those who are gender conforming. Each knew their performances did not match up to what parents, teachers, and others expected of them. Yet, both Jack and Jill refused to alter their behaviours. Jack hid his from public view until recently. Jill tried but failed to perform femininity, even when faced with severe sanctions from her mother. Each understood difference first through knowledge of gender-appropriate toys, activities, and behaviours.

Even as gender discourse produces Jack and Jill as different from the gender normal, both are inflected with other differences as well. The effects of race, class and gender are explicit in both narratives. The effects of poverty in Jill's early life were produced from the privileged indifference of a classist and racist society in which those who are poor are left without the resources to raise their children. Both poverty and racism were manifest in Jill's narrative about her parents as well. Her father died from the effects of disease and malnutrition; her mother died from a drug overdose. These early traumas inform Jill's identity in multiple ways. Racist practices continued throughout Jill's life and are particularly productive through schooling discourse. Today Jill is still read as Other because she is masculine and looks like she is Indigenous/First Nations. In order to understand Jill's life, the discursive effects of gender must be read with these other processes that shaped her identity.

Discursive effects of race and class mean that Jack's life is easier, relative to Jill. Even if school was a horrific place for Jack, he never knew the insecurities that faced Jill from a very young age. Jack was able to take for granted food, care, and shelter. This

security, in large measure, allowed him to become a high achiever academically. Jack was able to pass as white and thus never felt the effects of racism. Yet Jack knew the effects of a fat-phobic discourse. He knew that his body morphology did not match with a dominant body configuration of a sleek and fit masculinity. He felt the effects through the teasing and harassment.

As with Jill, in order to understand Jack's schooling years, the discursive effects of gender must be read alongside other cultural productions as well. In school, the discursive effects of gender, however, produce Jack and Jill as unintelligible to those around them. Their unintelligibility is premised on an insider/outsider status of inclusion and exclusion brought about by gender rigid discourse as well as other discursive productions. Each of them echoes this. Jack states, "I never fit in anywhere until I found my friend." In Jill's words, "this is not my world, no matter where I have been, I have not belonged...I hated school because no one let me be myself." In their articulations with gender rigid discourse, Jack and Jill became, in effect, unknowable except as deviant Others. This is because inherent in rigid gender discourse or heterornormativity, is the spectre of homosexuality.

Through their production as deviant Other, Jack and Jill became the feared homosexual, and therefore, unintelligible. Unintelligible, homosexual Others are discomfiting others. The net effect of gender discourse in schools is to relegate unintelligible, discomfiting, homosexual Others to the margins, either disappeared or so peripheral that they can be ignored. This effect or production of the Other occurs in spite of the resistances Jill and Jack offer by their very existence and actions throughout their schooling and growing up years.

Heterosexuality: Gender Rigidity in Formation and Gender Melancholic Selves

People picked on him and bullied him and called him a nerd, idiot, and faggot. (*Edmonton Journal*, April 30, 1999)

> Detailed investigations during the last few years have led me to the conviction that factors arising in sexual life represent the nearest and practically the most momentous causes of every single case of nervous illness. (Freud, 1959 [1917], p. 220)

> Melancholic formation of gender sheds light on the predicament of living within a culture which can mourn the loss of homosexual attachment only with great difficulty. (Butler, 1997, p. 133)

The preceding sections have pointed to the relentlessness of discourses of gender that fix a cohesion of sexed bodies, gendered behavior, and heterosexual desire and to the lives of some of those who do not fit these demands. There are, of course, other

examples. The killings at Columbine High in Littleton, Colorado[7] and the high school in Taber, Alberta are effects of the pathologies of gender rigid masculine behaviours. In both cases, the killers were perceived as threats to a normative masculinity. According to a dozen students at Columbine High, gunmen Harris and Klebold were taunted mercilessly by anti-gay jocks who called them "faggots" and "gay". The unnamed gunman in Taber was harassed daily at school by "male jocks" who also called him "faggot" and "gay."

Harris and Klebold dressed in Goth style clothing that occasionally included wearing makeup and black fingernail polish. The boy from Taber was a new kid in town who was socially inept, and had health and skin problems. All three boys denied that they were gay, yet harassment against them continued. In each incident, the threat posed to their sense of masculinity was turned into murderous revenge that demonstrated a hyper hetero-masculinity. Like the murderers of Brandon Teena, these boys killed that which threatened their sense of self. Punishment rendered by the school jocks for what they perceived as inappropriate masculine behaviors was countered with gender appropriate behaviours but with deadly effects.

What can one safely state about a culture which daily produces and reproduces acts of homophobia and heterosexism in relation to sexual life? Are homophobia and heterosexism deeply psychic disorders repressed and then displaced onto the bodies of the homosexual Other in the daily events of silence, exclusion, and violence? In closing this paper, I would like to theorize rigid heterosexuality as a psychic disorder that is so widespread and pervasive it infects all of us in the daily production of gendered and sexualized bodies.

Demands of heteronormativity in the production of a rigid heterosexuality involve a process of disordering the self or that self that once was homosexual. Psychopathologizing a dominant group identity is a viable, attractive and politicized strategy, given the focus of my present research. It is a counter-move, reversing the discursive order by casting rigid heterosexuality and its constitutive gendered bodies as troubled and psychopathologized Others. This perverse strategy aside, it makes some sense to understand the heterosexism and homophobia emanating from rigid heterosexuality as a grave and pervasive psychopathology requiring strategies and therapies to alleviate the psychic distress of rigid heterosexuality and to relieve the daily indignities and violence displaced onto homosexuals/queers.

As Butler (1997) points out, the lost object of mourning, homosexual attachment, is disappeared from the consciousness of the melancholic heterosexual who mourns this lost object by acting out against actual homosexuals. Internalized into the ego, the lost object, that is homosexual attachment to the same sex parent, becomes the self that cannot mourn its lost object but preserves it internally and constantly plays out that loss by insisting on the disappearance of the homosexual.

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[7]See "Young gays traumatized by shooting" in *Gale Force* 9(6), 5-6 for information from the perspective of queer students in the Littleton, Colorado area.

Melancholia, according to Freud is the unfinished process of grieving for what is lost to the self. Melancholia is thus, central to the identification formations that form the ego. For Freud, the identifications formed through loss and therefore grief through melancholia, are the forms through which that which is lost becomes internalized and preserved in and as the ego. Essential to understanding Freud's sense of ego-development is that the ego is "first and foremost a bodily ego" (Freud in Butler, 1997, p.132). Given the importance of masculinity and femininity for Freudian theory as well as social theory generally, we can assume that the bodily ego is a gendered ego.[8]

The psychopathology of rigid heterosexuality is the effect of so few cultural opportunities to mourn lost homosexual attachment. Cultural disavowals of homosexuality are so strong the heterosexist or homophobe finds few opportunities, except violent denial of this aspect of self, to mourn this part of the self. The links of this psychopathology to discourses of gender and its effects on conformists and nonconformists alike is reason enough to advocate remedies for disordered heterosexual selves to mourn their early homosexual identifications and to make it unnecessary for unmourned loss to be taken out on homosexual peoples.

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[8]When and how this gendered ego is formed within Lacanian psychoanalysis is not taken up here. For a discussion, see Dean (2000).

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Production & Consumption of Youthful Identities: Understanding Queer Youth in the Context of Youth Studies and Popular Culture

> Heterosexual ideology, in combination with a potent ideology about gender and identity *in maturation,* therefore bears down in the heaviest and often deadliest way on those with the least resources to combat it: queer children and teens. In a culture dominated by talk of "family values," the outlook is grim for any hope that child-rearing institutions of home and state can become less oppressive. (Warner 1994, p. xvi, emphasis added)

Youth Studies[1] within eurowestern discourse has produced an immense body of social science research.[2] For the most part, this research naturalizes and solidifies what counts as knowledge about age-stage categories and who counts as normal within each age-stage. As well, this research is almost entirely silent about sexual minority youth. In this paper, I am interested in pursuing both how social science research has produced the category 'youth' and how queer youth negotiate the subject positions constrained by this category. A secondary concern is how queer youth mediate the *scientia sexualis* (Foucault, 1980) of Youth Studies in the context of popular cultural discourses about youth.

Interspersing scientific and cultural discourses about youth with the voices of queer youth, as I do in this paper, deconstructs the category 'youth' produced by social science research and sustained by popular culture. In some instances, what queer youth have to say deconstructs the category 'youth' by directly contradicting the results of research that neither includes nor countenances them as subjects. In other instances, what these youth say substantiates mainstream Youth Studies research in ways that exposes the absurdity of assuming that young people are a monolithic group. The comments by the queer youth that follow are jarring for a reflexive reader because the comments confront the reader with her own assumptions about youth and queer youth, in particular. For example, when reading a comment about sexual activity by a queer youth, the reader may be confirmed in her assumptions about the hypersexuality of queer people. In any event, as a consequence of the comments, she may be required to rethink assumptions about youth as a category.

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[1]While it is not possible to take up all the literatures which encompass this term, my argument is directed at literature related to youth which assumes the category and proceeds to research or theorize from that point.

[2]The history of youth discourses presented here takes up eurowestern discourses. The history of sexuality and of youth is a diverse history across cultures and time. Discourses are culturally located as well as raced and gendered. The brief history I have presented here is white and eurowestern. Gender functions unevenly across what is contained within these pages as well. Plato, for example, did believe that female children and youth could have the same education as male children and youth while Aristotle did not. I take up gender in the previous chapter and take up discourses of "youth" as represented by other authors who have mostly not problematized the category around gender and race. The problem lies with their representations, mine is a discourse analysis of these.

Research and scholarship, some of it prominent, like that of Margaret Mead and Sigmund Freud and a large body of literature in Queer Youth Studies and Queer Theory, some of which I present here, also deconstructs the category 'youth' produced by mainstream Youth Studies. This work has had little impact on mainstream Youth Studies. The voices of queer youth juxtaposed with literature that disrupts mainstream Youth Studies have a much different sensibility. Their voices resonate with this literature.

Youth Studies are comprised of what adults[3] know about youth. As a consequence of this research, 'youth' and 'adolescents' are reinforced as real, natural categories. Interestingly, those who are categorized as youth or adolescents do not themselves use these terms. In a 1990 survey in the United States, sixty-four percent of young people ages thirteen to seventeen polled on the question "what terms do you consider acceptable for describing people your own age?" chose "young adults" over the sociological term "youth" (twenty-nine percent) and the psychological term "adolescent" (nineteen percent) (Gallup).

Youth Studies represent youth subjectivity as irrational in relation to adults and hormonally driven. Youth is projected as a time of sexual innocence or at least inactivity or struggle over being sexually active, even while it is posited as a period of storm and stress. Indeed, part of the struggle of storm and stress for youth, is the struggle to remain sexually innocent. In part, contradictions in Youth Studies occur because discourses of youth operate simultaneously with other discourses, for example those of gender and race. In a given period of time, discourses may overlap and reinforce each other or they may contradict or conflict with each other. Discourses of gender that produce a sexualized subject position coincide with, yet contradict, discourses of sexually innocent youth, even as they reproduce and reinforce the irrationality of the sexually active youth. Gender, as well, has differential effects for those categorized male versus those labelled female. Discourses of youth produce youth as irrational in relation to adults and discourses of heteronormativity produce queer youth as irrational in relation to 'normal' youth.

Discourses of youth represent youth as a time of sexual innocence yet assume that youth are heterosexual. When queer youth appear in these discourses, they are produced as underdeveloped. And yet, as this paper reveals, queer youth live rich, diverse, complicated lives. These are lives about which Youth Studies have no knowledge or interest.

The Production of the Category Youth

The idea that youth are distinctively different from humans of other ages and that they have special needs, wants, impulses, desires and limited capabilities has occurred in

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[3] My positionality/location as both adult and researcher presents interesting dilemmas. Is my critique yet another exercise of power/knowledge? In an attempt to work reflexively with this regime of truth, I will use the phrase youth discourse or youth in relation to the *scientia sexualis* of the age-stage category and will refer to those young people in my study aged 13 to 21 as queer youth. My research is, of course, still saturated with the authority of a body of expert knowledge from which it is not possible to escape. Taking up the category while destabilizing or deconstructing the category shifts the expertness of my knowledge to what Linda Hutcheon (1989) calls a complicitous critique.

Eurowestern thinking at least from the time of the ancient Greeks[4]. For Plato (408-347 bc) and Aristotle (384-322 bc), for example, youth was a third and distinct biological stage of life after infancy and childhood which was thought to begin at age fourteen and extend to age twenty-one. Both Plato and Aristotle viewed youth as the stage of life in which the capacity for reason first developed. Because of this, Plato argued in *The Republic* that serious education should begin at age fourteen (1956). The infant mind, according to Plato, is too undeveloped to learn much so he thought that education in childhood should focus on sports and music. Education in science and mathematics was to be delayed until youth when the mind is ready, finally, to learn to apply reason to learning these subjects. Plato constructed a clear age hierarchy which placed youth above infants and children but firmly established them as less able than adults who were regarded as more reasoned.

Aristotle thought children, like animals, were ruled by the impulsive pursuit of pleasure. For Aristotle the capacity for reasoning and making rational choices occurred only after childhood and for some not at all. Aristotle argued that it takes the entire course of youth for reason to become fully established. At the beginning of youth the impulses remain in charge and even intensify because sexual desires develop during this time period.

> The young are in character prone to desire and ready to carry any desire they may have formed into action. Of bodily desires it is the sexual to which they are most disposed to give way, and in regard to sexual desire they exercise no self-restraint. (Aristotle, xxx)

For Aristotle, it is only at the end of youth, at age twenty-one, that reason is able to establish firm control over the impulses, including the sexual impulses.

Western discourses about youth are indebted to, indeed saturated by the idea of youth as an impulsive, especially sexually impulsive, age-stage time of life. The idea that youth are irrational, impulsive, bored, alienated, sullen or generally at odds with adults and the adult world is consistently marshalled in adult representations of youth in educational, psychological, sociological, psychiatric, medical, and popular cultural discourse. The following are examples from contemporary popular culture.

> Odd is not a useful definition when referring to adolescents. It's hard differentiating between a teenager with problems and one whose only problem is being a teenager.....a pie chart of the teenage brain reveals that 54 percent of the organ is devoted to tracking the state of their hormones, 21 percent does play-by-play analyses of their mercurial moods, and 10

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[4]This is not a definitive history of the category youth but rather a provision of some conditions of possibility which come together to produce contemporary subjectivities. How persons between the ages of 13 and 21 actually lived their lives from Plato on and resisted regulatory mechanisms like Christianity is outside the purview of this paper. Phillippe Aries provides a compelling historical account in *Centuries of Childhood* on how children and youth may have lived their lives.

> percent is given over to calculations: what music they desperately need, what movies they'd die if they didn't see, and what items of clothing everybody else has but they don't. (Roberts, 1999, p. 1)
>
> In preparation for meeting his children, Helma had read a book titled *Raising a happy teenager,* and attempted to watch music videos on television but surrendered after ten minutes.... the teenage years are confusing...her mood will pass...so where are those two adolescent nightmares?..... anybody over twenty-two is abysmally stupid and useless, and *such* an embarrassment. Don't you remember how you felt at that age? (Dereske, 2001, pp.13, 24, 40, emphasis in original)
>
> You'll have plenty of time to hide your emotions when you're old. (Bonnie Bell advertisement for "Bottled Emotion" products, *Teen People*, November 2000)

Early Christian writings also represented the struggle between youthful reason and passion. In his autobiographical *Confessions* (400), Saint Augustine (354-430) described his early life until his conversion to Christianity at age thirty-three. According to Augustine, as a teenager and in his early twenties, he lived as a reckless young man in an impulsive, pleasure-seeking way. Not only did he drink large quantities of alcohol and spend money extravagantly, he had sex with many young women and fathered a child outside of marriage. As a newly converted Christian, Augustine repented his reckless youth, claiming that Christianity, not maturity, establishes the rule of reason over passion here on earth. While Augustine favoured the position that youth are naturally, biologically impulsive and irrational in relation to adults, he nevertheless disrupted the naturalness of youthful irrationality because he also believed that a conversion to Christianity did not depend on maturity.

The idea of the innocence of youth was an effect of the increasing regulation of bodily habits including sexual practices, by Christianity. Christianity, through the auspices of the early Catholic Church, consolidated the imperative that sex be procreative within Christian marriage. Sexual pleasure, especially outside of marriage, was considered to be sinful pleasure of the flesh. Sexual innocence was thought to reside naturally in children and youth. Discourses about the innocence of youth can be traced at least to the accounts of the Children's Crusade that took place in 1212 (Sommerville, 1982). The "children's crusade" was composed mostly of young people in their teens, including many university students who were at that time younger than university students now, usually entering higher education between ages thirteen to fifteen. Setting out from Germany, the young crusaders are said to have travelled the Mediterranean coast, believing that when they arrived at the waters of the Red Sea, the Sea would part for them as it had for Moses and that they would walk over to the Holy Land. Once in the Holy Land, Jerusalem, and the areas where Jesus had lived, the young crusaders planned to appeal to the Muslims to allow Christian pilgrims to visit holy sites. Several adult crusades had already been

conducted in attempts to take the Holy Land through military force. The Children's Crusade was a new attempt to conquer the Holy Land through peaceful means, inspired by the belief that Jesus had decreed that this end would be gained only through the efforts of innocent youth.

While the Children's Crusade was unsuccessful, as an event it underlines a temporal distinction between youth and adulthood distinguished by innocence, particularly sexual innocence. This youthful innocence was perceived as possessing a special value, a potent and persuasive power over adults, one that exceeds a rational explanation. This notion of youth as a time of sexual innocence contrasts with Augustine and others' accounts of youthful sexual activity and it has little correspondence to the lives of the youth in this study.

> **I remember when I was seven, I was caught laying naked in bed with another seven year old girl. We were just laying there but we were playing house. There was another time with one of my school mates when I was in grade four. I remember we experimented. We were playing, we were just playing with each other. And that was a boy. My first crush ever was a boy the same age as me. And I never actually had any sexual relations with him, but he was my first crush. (Elton, 1998)**

Since in Youth Studies, youth are considered to be heterosexual and queer people, whatever their age, are overdetermined by their sexuality, it is possible to hold the position that youth are sexually innocent and also accept that Elton was sexually active as a queer youth, rather than call into question the notion of the sexual innocence of youth.

While notions of youth as a distinct period of life separate from adulthood existed prior to the nineteenth century, specific conditions in the nineteenth century made possible a more rigid division between adults and youth. One such condition was the industrial revolution. There was a tremendous demand for youth and pre-adolescent children to staff mines, factories, and shops during this time. More physically resilient, younger people were better able to withstand the terrible working conditions of the time than older people. Younger people also tended to have smaller bodies required in mines and other cramped working spaces and they were more easily exploited as cheaper labour even though, like adults, they worked an average of twelve hours, six to seven days a week (Tyack, 1990). The first stages of the Industrial Revolution occurred in Great Britain and distinguished younger people from adults as exploited labour while placing them in many of the same roles as adults.

Urban reformers, youth workers, and early educators who were concerned about the physical and moral exploitation of young people were key to the enactment of laws to restrict child labour and to require children to attend secondary school (Kett, 1977). Prior to the nineteenth century laws requiring children to attend school were restricted to primary school attendance (Tyack, 1990). Between 1890 and 1920 increasing state legal changes required compulsory attendance for 'youth' (Arnett & Taber, 1994).

New technological demands required literate and more skilled workers. The idea of young people going to school for a prolonged period of time in order to train for an increasingly skilled workforce became entrenched during this time with the effect that youth became isolated for longer periods of time from the world of adults and work. Discourses of youthful innocence still figured centrally but this innocence was associated with notions of prolonged dependence on adults in order to educate future workers. The need for a skilled work force in industrializing nations made possible an interface between youth as sexually innocent and their economic dependence.

The formation of human sciences during this time was a condition that had a profound effect on the construction of youth as a category distinct from adults and children. Youth Studies can be traced to this emerging youth *savoir*[5] . In the sections that follow, I present some of the most influential scholars of this new science and how their work reinforced the notion of youth as a distinct social category with universal developmental attributes. This work variously understands youth as a period of storm and stress, a period of maturation, as a time for proper sexual maturation influenced in particular by parents and family but also impacted by friends and peers, as a time for prolonged dependency, and as a time in which internal problems (depression, anxiety, and suicide) and external problems (risky behaviors, aggression and violence) are prevalent.

Youth as a Period of Storm and Stress

A key figure in North America of this emerging *savoir* of youth was G. Stanley Hall (1844-1924). Hall obtained the first Ph.D. in psychology in the United States and was founder of the American Psychological Association as well as first president of Clark University. Significantly, Hall was the initiator of the "child study movement" and became a strong advocate of age-stage development theories about children and adolescents. He was, as well, an advocate for improved conditions for children and adolescents in the family, school and workplace. In 1904, Hall published his landmark two volume set of texts titled *Adolescence*. This work reflected a culmination of many years of Hall's thinking about adolescence as well as research by a range of adult experts about youth.

Adolescence became the intellectual proof of the distinctiveness of youth as a separate category of person and established the study of adolescents as a growth area of scholarly concern. Hall is particularly noted for his theory of recapitulation in which he proposed that the development of each individual recapitulates or reenacts the evolutionary development of the human species as a whole. Adolescence, Hall professed, reflects a stage in the human evolutionary past when there was a great deal of upheaval and disorder. Adolescents recapitulate this past, according to Hall, by experiencing "storm and stress" as a standard part of their development. The storm and stress period of youth, as Hall's theory is more popularly known, is manifested in conflict with parents, mood disruptions, and risky behaviours.

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[5]*Savoir* is the French for sciences and used throughout the English translation of *Use of Pleasure* (1986).

Hall's views in *Adolescence* established what he believed were natural, biological conditions of the category youth and these became the cornerstone of the science of youth. This science created a subject position of brooding, irritable, petulant, impulsive, volatile young people who, while heterosexual, were considered to be sexually innocent. Youth was projected as a time of sexual innocence even while they were considered at risk for engaging in sexual behaviour considered normal for adults. When engaged in by youth, sexual activity was regarded as out of control behaviour. The link between out of control hormones and sexual behaviours is a cause for concern throughout Youth Studies in relation to teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and single parenthood.

So I went into the public washroom with him, and had sex. I didn't know him and yet he knew I was gay. (Rupaul, 1998)

An effect of constructing the stage of youth as a time of storm and stress, even while a time of sexual innocence, is those who are not stressed by the conditions of youth are characterized as unusual or abnormal. For example, Anna Freud (1896-1982) viewed the storm and stress of adolescence as both universal and inevitable. Adolescents who did not experience storm and stress had serious psychological problems, according to Freud. She wrote that "to be normal during the adolescent period is by itself abnormal" (1958, p. 267).

The developmental-stage theory of Erik Erikson (1902-1994) also postulated that an absence of storm and stress in youth is a sign of pathology. He wrote that youth who seek security are psychologically impaired as "the total lack of conflict during adolescence is an ominous sign that the individuals's psychological maturity may not be progressing" (Keniston, 1971, p. 364). Suicide, the second most frequent cause of death for all youth, is implicitly linked with the storm and stress of youth. Moodiness, alienation, and depression are factors often listed in youth suicide research. All adolescents, then, according to this literature, require psychological treatment or other expert understanding to help them successfully navigate their way through this vexed phase of development.

Hall, Freud, and Erikson characterize youth as a universal stage in which youth subjectivity is naturally pathological. More recent scholars have argued against a universal, biological experience of storm and stress during youth, since most adolescents like and respect their parents (Paikoff & Brooks-Gunn, 1991); mood disruptions are not so extreme that they require psychological treatment for most (Arnett, 2000); and most youth do not engage in highly reckless behaviour on a regular basis (Arnett, 1999a). According to Arnett, conflict with parents marks early to mid-adolescence, mood disruptions peak at mid-adolescence, and risky behaviours, such as driving fast, substance use, and risky sexual activity, peak in late adolescent and emerging adulthood (1999a).

Arnett also reports that middle-class youth are more likely to experience storm and stress than are other young people (Arnett, 2000). That working class youth, even though highly constrained in other ways, may be less stressed because they are working and making decisions about their lives in relation to their more financially dependent middle class peers is under-theorized in this literature.

I was 16. I graduated early. I concentrated a lot on my studies because I wanted to finish. I knew that it was just going to be harder ahead of me. I stayed with a friend, sleeping on the couch. By that point, I had found work and I was working at a pizzeria. (Elton,1998)

Middle class youth are often more highly managed and controlled through middle class family values. This arguably produces storm and stress because of wanting to be in control of one's own life.

I was sixteen and on my own... but I was working right on the gayest street in the city and loving it. Absolutely loving it. I remember being at this bar one night, and that is where I met my second lover Darren. (Elton, 1998)

Because storm and stress, for the most part, has been taken up as a natural, biological stage, there has not been attention to other conditions of possible stress for young people such as attitudes toward race, ethnicity, or religious background.

Thank god I have a Canadian name. If they were to know I am East Indian they would be relentless. (Rupaul, 1998)

I come from a Mormon family and am very religious myself. One of my struggles is between my religion and my gayness. (Oscar, 1997)

Despite the recognition by some youth researchers that social conditions produce youth as relatively disempowered individuals in relation to the adults around them, a condition that many youth find 'stressful', social conditions are nevertheless downplayed in Youth Studies in favour of a biological/developmental explanation for the storm and stress of youth. The idea of an age-stage segregated category linked to the biology of hormonal influence on moods and risky behaviours continues to underwrite even newer work in Youth Studies. Popular culture reinforces the notion of youth as a separate stage in films, novels, magazines and media headlines (Cote & Allahar, 1994; Whateley, 1991). Films like *The Breakfast Club, Weird Science, American Pie, American Pie 2, and America's Sweethearts* reinforce that youth are separate from adults and children, as do television shows like *That 60's Show* and *Friends.* Special magazines like *Teen People* and *Teen,* as well as media headlines like "teen brains", "Are tortured youth our future?", and "Smarten up? wild teens don't have the brains for it" have the effect of producing youth as distinct from other age categories.

Youth as a Period of Maturation

In addition to his contribution to the storm and stress literature, Erik Erikson (1968) advanced a developmental model for adolescence. Erikson's psychological model, replete with a specialized vocabulary based on years of expert study and practice, occupies a central place in most introductory texts in Youth Studies. For Erikson and the many theorists and practitioners who follow him, the central developmental task of adolescence, generally viewed as beginning with the first noticeable changes of puberty (Feldman & Elliott, 1990), is the formation of a coherent self-identity. The two variables which establish the attainment of a mature, or coherent, identity, according to Erikson, are crisis and commitment experienced in relation to occupational choice, religion, and political ideology. Crisis is the adolescent's period of engagement in choosing among meaningful alternatives while commitment refers to the degree of personal investment the individual exhibits in a particular alternative. Erikson proposed that mature identity can only be achieved when an individual youth experiences a crisis and becomes committed to an occupation and ideology.

> The most widespread expression of the discontented search of youth is the craving for locomotion whether expressed in a general "being on the go," "tearing after something," or "running around"; or in locomotion proper, as in vigorous work, in absorbing sports, in rapt dancing, in shiftless *Wanderschaft,* and in the employment and misuse of speedy animals and machines...for ego identity is partially conscious and largely unconscious. It is a psychological process reflecting social processes; but with sociological means it can be seen as a social process reflecting psychological processes; it meets its crisis in the adolescence. (Erikson, 1963, p. 9)

Crisis, not surprisingly, is yet another form of storm and stress.

Erikson's developmental model posits basic identity statuses during which youth work through crisis and commitment. Four measures based on Erikson's theory were constructed by Marcia and used extensively through a measure called the Identity Status Interview which was used to classify youth in a systematic way in terms of their developmental progress. The four measures are identity diffused, foreclosure, moratorium, and identity achieved (1966, 1980, 1989, 1993, 1994, 1999).

> **To be fully accepted for who I am as a queer person....well that would be perfect. (Chastity, 1998)**

Identity diffused status is when a youth has not moved through a crisis, explored meaningful alternatives and made a commitment towards an acceptable identity.

> **By the time I was sixteen years old, I was very established in who I was. I was very strong. I knew who I was. That was the**

start of my gay activist career, starting a youth group. (Elton, 1998)

Foreclosure occurs when youth establish an identity without crisis or exploration, usually in keeping with parent expectations.

My parents always wanted me to go to university. They have been very good about accepting me as gay and so I feel like I owe them and should go to university. (Svend,1998)

When youth are embroiled in continual crisis and search for identity because they have made no commitment to ideology and occupation they are in a state of *moratorium*.

In high school, I called myself gay. Even though I was sleeping with women, on a fairly regular basis, I never actually had relationships with women. Just sex, that was it. I called myself gay. (Elton, 1998)

Finally, *identity achieved* is the state whereby a youth has gone through a crisis and exploration of alternatives and come to make a commitment.

Well, I think everybody just thought I was just being rebellious. My father was really very physically abusive. And so, everybody thought that this was just a way to hurt him. A way to rebel against him for the way that he was treating me. (Elton, 1998)

In grade four, my mum would get really mad at me because I wouldn't wear dresses. I always hated wearing them and still do not wear dresses. She would let me do it but it was against her wishes and after a while she would just give up. Later I dressed in urban grunge and my mum hated that too. (Chastity, 1998)

Many criticisms have been made of this theory including the idea that youth do not necessarily move through these stages in exact sequence and may even enter adolescence from, for example, foreclosure (Marcia, 1989). Also assumed is that all youth come from the same family background–the family is represented as a nuclear, middle-class, white and heterosexual. The possibility that different family configurations might have different crisis and commitment phases is rarely raised as an issue.

My real mother and father are dead and my brothers and sisters are in care, all over the place. (Jill, 1998)

My father is dead I think. I hated him anyway. He died from a massive drug overdose. My mother is East Indian and she is

mentally ill, off and on, so my grandparents took care of me and my younger brother and sister. Lots of times I take care of them [younger siblings]. We are/were always poor. (Rupaul, 1998)

I never knew my biological father. My step father is very abusive. My Mum is real Catholic and I have a half sister. (Elton, 1998)

After my mother left my father, she fell apart and wouldn't get off the couch. So we had to fend for ourselves. There was never anything to eat and school was my safe haven. (Virginia, 1998)

My parents separated and divorced a few years ago. My father is Lebanese but he gave me nothing. All my artistic talent and everything came from my mother (Greg, 1998)

My parents adopted me and my older brother. They got separated because my father was so brutal disciplining me and my brother. Then my mother was killed in a car accident when I was staying at the home. (Michel, 1998)

I am an only child and my parents are not very religious. I think this made a big difference. Both have really good jobs. We raised horses for a long time and I teach snowboarding now. (Chastity,1998)

My family is very close and both my parents are very devoted to each other and us kids. I have a younger brother and sister. (Svend, 1998)

My mother and father are divorced. I live with my mother and sister and we are a paycheck away from poverty. We moved into this horrible place after my parents split up. My mum is Mormon and so am I. This makes life really, really hard for me. (Oscar, 1997)

I am very close to my mother, aunt, and grandmother. My grandmother is aboriginal and tells me I am a good person. I had a half sister, Mary, who I loved dearly but she was killed in an accident on her sixteenth birthday. Me and my mother still mourn her. My father is not around much because of his job. When he is he doesn't say much and is very conservative. (Jack,1998)

My family is so normal. I still live at home and get along well with both my parents. I think sometimes that we are too much alike. I don't have any brothers or sisters but I like that. (Rock, 1998)

Again, the theme of crisis (storm and stress), something that most likely every human subject in the world experiences at some point, is reified in youth theories.

It should be interesting at grad because I am going to take someone I want to take [a girlfriend] and I sit at the head table because I am the president. I wonder what Mrs. A [principal] will do or if someone will tell her ahead of time. (Chastity, 1998)

Erikson's work has been validated continuously through the work of age-stage theorists (Adams et al., 1992; Grotevant, 1987; Marcia, 1989; Waterman, 1992), thus solidifying the normative binary between youth and adults. Like other social science research in which the subject of the research is assumed in advance of the research, these researchers are bound to reinforce the categories with which they begin.

Youth as a Time for Proper Sexual Maturity: Influence of Parents & The Family

Capitalist democracies have relied on the heterosexual family (Kinsman, 1996) and the unpaid labour of women in the home throughout the past century (Sayer, 1991). Both the heterosexual family and unpaid labour of women are premised on specific roles for those within the unit. Adult males and females act as role models for unemployed children and young people as they develop or mature towards 'normal' sexual and worklife maturity (Adams, 1997; Parsons, 1964). Psychosocial theories of development describe three distinct stages for children and youth to move through to maturity: autosociality, homosociality, and finally, heterosociality (Miller, 1990).

The traditional heterosexual, nuclear family, is a system of power central to maintaining youth as a prolonged period of financial dependency with a highly specific form of subjectivity (Cote & Allahar, 1996). In her book *The trouble with normal,* Mary Louise Adams (1997) traces the ways in which youth and heterosexuality are produced in postwar Canada. One of the many ways this occurred was through notions of "family values" and what was to count as the appropriate family structure. The idea that there is a 'proper' family structure is assumed and familiar throughout social science research from Sigmund Freud (1940) to Talcott Parsons (1964) to contemporary Youth Studies (Arnett, 2000). In study after study, theory after theory, the heterosexual nuclear family is described as the correct family in which youth mature into 'normal', contributing citizens. Any other family structure is suspect of producing deviance in children and youth. For example, the infamous Moynihan Report (1965) in the United States 'documented' the pathology of mother-headed Black families and their role in the continuing pathology of

Black youth. A more recent example arises from research that found that children with homosexual parents were more likely to explore homosexual activity themselves.

> Amy Desai, a policy analyst with the conservative group Focus on the Family, said the new report is "alarming" in its suggestions children of homosexuals might be more open to homosexual activity. "Kids do best when they have a married mother and a married father." (Associated Press reported in *Edmonton Journal*, 2001 p. B7).

Families must be comprised of 'opposite' sex parents, in order for children and youth to take on expectations and norms for gender and sexuality. Mothers and fathers are considered to be the initial and appropriate role models for proper gendering and the nuclear, heterosexual family is the guiding prerequisite to ensure this (Adams, 1997; Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968; Parsons, 1964; Rice, 1999).[6] Appropriate toys and playmates are provided or approved by parents so that acceptable gendering occurs (Burke, 1997).

> **I loved my-little-ponies and stuffed toys. I would comb my- little-ponies for hours with my cousins. And my mother and my aunt let me play with these and bought them for me. I had, I still have, a huge stuffed animal collection that my mum, aunt and grandmother gave to me. (Jack, 1997)**

> **It's almost a bit scary that there are these stereotypes that are almost true a lot of the times. I read somewhere, maybe Sweden or something, that the parents put down a bunch of toys and let the child crawl towards the toys and whatever the child picks is what that child will be....and it is perfectly okay to pick any toy and be whatever. It doesn't matter if the kid is a boy and picks a girl toy. (Chastity, 1998)**

Female and male youth are to see their parents acting in appropriate gender and heterosexual roles (Smith, 1999). According to this literature two-parent, opposite sex parent families are more likely to produce 'normally' maturing children (Adams, 1997; Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1950; Parsons, 1964). That parents are heterosexual is never questioned in this literature. The two, opposite-sex parent family is the taken-for-granted family and special chapters devoted to families who deviate from this configuration are included in many Youth Studies texts (Rice, 1999). Even these families, however, are headed by heterosexual parents.

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[6]Arnett (2000) and Rice (1999) are authors of introductory readers for Youth Studies and the assumption of heterosexual, nuclear families permeates both texts. For example the idea of the dysfunctional family is often related to heterosexual, nuclear family breakdown.

He [best friend] finally told his parents and they were so awful he ended up moving out of home for a year. They wanted him to go to therapy and he was grounded indefinitely. They were so religious and it was against their religion. Once he left home, things were much better for him. He got to be so open about who he was and got his life back together again. (Chastity, 1998)

Appropriate maturation for youth within the traditional family establishes a moratorium[7] on sexual behaviours even while youth are expected to identify as heterosexual (Adams, 1997; Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1950; Parsons, 1964; Rice, 1999).

We were talking about stereotypes and we realized we fit the stereotypes perfectly. I used to play with He-Man [heroic male action toy] and Alexander has a picture of himself in his mother's wedding dress at age five. (Chastity,1998)

The imperative that young people are heterosexual even while they are to be sexually inactive sets up sometimes absurd consequences. Take, for example, a recent controversy over the sexuality of fictional, yet iconic, Canadian figure, Anne of Green Gables. At a recent scholarly meeting, a professor read a paper in which she speculated about the possible sexual nature of some of Anne's friendships. This created considerable reaction by editorialists and letter writers in the mainstream press. The idea of a homosocial Anne was particularly vexing for a letter writer from St. Albert, who was awarded a Golden Pen Award by the *Edmonton Journal* for her letter about reading *Anne of Green Gables* to her children. The idea of reading Anne's desires as homoerotic was to her a repugnant and ridiculous idea. In response, I wrote the following to the editor:

> Thank you to Barbara Stasuk and *The Journal's* Cheryl Purdey. Both sure straightened me out! ("Anne response wins prize for top letter," Golden Pen Award, *Journal,* Aug.22).
> The very spectre of a Canadian cultural icon having same sex desire is just too beyond what could possibly be Canadian!
> Or is it the idea that children and youth may be sexual or have sexual desires that gets their goat?
> And yet, children and youth are sexualized all the time around heterosexual desire. If Jane and Dick play together too much, it is intimated they "love" each other and are encouraged to think of themselves as prospective mates in marriage.
> Since opposite sex-desire exists, it can be thought or theorized about children and youth since they too exist in real life and in Canadian literature.
> As long as children and youth are heterosexualized, they can be homosexualized. Please, give the Anne of Green Gables thing a break and open your minds beyond

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[7]The idea of moratorium or period of delay is from Erikson (1950; 1963).

your own immediate experience. (Filax, 2000, p. A19)

While Youth Studies literature represents youth as (hetero)sexually innocent, youth are also represented as hormonally [sexually] driven (Whateley, 1991) or troubled (Arnett, 2000, Rice, 1999). Young males, in particular, are depicted this way, while young females are in danger of become pregnant and both boys and girls are at the mercy of sexually transmitted diseases (Arnett, 2000; Rice, 1999).

> **He bought me flowers. I wanted to be with him after that. So I asked him out. He was my first lover and we were together for three and a half years. And I came out shortly after that. I thought, well I'm gay. I know that I am gay. I was twelve years old. (Elton, 1998)**

Traditional families are sites where sexuality is policed (Adams, 1997; Burke, 1996).

> **Yeah, well you see I was called sissy and everything by people at school and also my mother used to bug me about it....she would just say "why do you act like a girl?" Things like that. "I have never seen you play with a ball before. Why don't you act like a man?" (Rupaul, 1998)**

A substantive literature on appropriate youth behaviours around heterosexual dating rituals exists (Kuttler, La Greca & Prinstein, 1999; Miller & Benson, 1999; Paul & White, 1990; Smith, 1999). This literature provides guidelines for dating, research on dating, and descriptive information about dating (Arnett, 2000; Rice, 1999). Traditional families provide opportunities for youth to practice good dating methods as part of 'normal' maturation.

> **I lived on my own from the time I was fourteen. I signed off any right to my parents' support so that I could get social assistance. I always felt more mature than my peers because I was paying my own bills and buying my own groceries and they were living at home and complaining about their parents. (Elton,1998)**

Like parents, schools are to help regulate dating practice providing opportunities through dances and high school graduation ceremonies.

> **I went to my high school prom with my lover.....everybody in the school knew I was going...they just ignored it, it was easier to ignore than anything. I had lots of friends in school, so I got lots of support from my friends. But I had to fight my way to get that support. I wouldn't have gotten that support, had I not been a**

fighter. (Elton, 1998)

This literature is replete with descriptions of non-sexual mating rituals with 'opposite-sex' partners and is encouraged as 'normal' behaviour for maturing youth (Arnett, 2000; Rice, 1999; Smith, 1999). Use of pictures and pronouns throughout these texts work to authorize and reinforce heteronormativity (Arnett, 2000; Rice, 1999).

Adults have long been concerned about youth sexual behaviours. The level of this concern has sometimes reached the level of moral panic. In the 1970s in Toronto, one such panic surfaced over demands for better birth control information for young female teens (Sethna, 2000). An articulate, fifteen year old spokesperson requesting better birth control information from the Toronto Board of Education was placed under RCMP surveillance. She was deemed a student activist and a risk to the state (Sethna, 2000). Other adult panics surface periodically about teenage pregnancy and heterosexually transmitted diseases (Adams, 1997), as well as the menace of homosexual predators (Kinsman, 1996; Adams, 1997).

Popular culture reflects this concern that young people might be sexual. In a recent newspaper article on Natalie Wood, the author lamented that "Wood had an affair with director Nicholas Ray when she was -*ahem*-age 15 [and that] afterward, you need a scorecard to tote the tumbles" (Smyntek, 2001, p. E5). It is assumed that early sexual behaviours are harmful and that Wood is to be pitied for having had these experiences. According to the author, if Wood's had better parents and she had not embarked so early during her youth on a path of sexual promiscuity, she would have had a better life and death. To typecast Woods' life in such a way works only if we accept discourses of youth that assume that happily matured adult lives are produced by sexual innocence and 'good' parents.

Adult moral panic over gay-straight alliances in high schools in various school districts also exemplifies concern over youth sexuality but more specifically these concerns are about non- conforming sexuality, and, in particular, homosexuality (GALE/BC, 2001, p.6). This adult behaviour is consistent with research from Youth Studies that endorses a particular development towards heterosexual maturity and activity. It does this by authorizing a moratorium on sexual activity and encouraging youth to practice appropriate gender 'roles' through dating practice.

Deviant behaviours of problem youth are traced back to family pathology. Suicide is linked to family dysfunction (Bolger, et al, 1989; Kosky, Silbum & Zubrick, 1990) as are eating disorders (Caspar, 1992; Kenny & Hart, 1992). Delinquency is linked to family conflict (Barnes & Farrell, 1992; Martin & Pritchard, 1991) while depression is related to family pathology (Asarmov & Horton, 1990). Youth at risk for these behaviors are thought to come from non-traditional families, once referred to as "broken" homes, and now referred to as single parent families.

> **Well, I think what happened is that my mom talked to my aunt, who talked to my grandma, who talked to my blah, blah, blah. Within a day everybody [in large extended family] knew. So that**

was pretty hard, but they all just figured "It's just a phase!" (Elton,1998)

When a youth identifies as homosexual, it is assumed that she or he is sexually active, whether or not the youth has had an actual sexual practice or is simply making an identity claim. This is an effect of the over-determination of homosexuality as an identity with sexual practice.

I feel better now that I am out to my parents because the principal knows my father [a school principal also]....and my father knows her and my parents will be at my grad so they [principal, teachers] will have to accept that I am bringing another girl as my date. She is not my girlfriend but they don't know that. They will only know she is my date. (Chastity,1998)

According to Youth Studies, parents have significant but decreasing influence on youth as they mature. This reduced influence is in relation to specific issues like education, work, risk behaviours, and dating (Arnett, 2000; Rice, 1999). As well, while time spent with parents and other family members decreases as youths get older, the amount of conflict with parents increases (Larson & Richards, 1994; Youniss & Smollar, 1985).

She [mother] went there for me. She wanted to give me and herself information to help us know what to do and what to expect. She knew there was lots of discrimination and wanted to know how to deal with this. She wanted to help me. (Chastity, 1998)

When youth have problems dealing with parents, this is evidence of storm and stress and their behaviors are regarded as irrational (Arnett, 2000; Rice, 1999). Maturity for youth is measured by the degree of separation from parents.

He [best friend] finally told his parents and ended up moving out of home for a year. They were so religious and it was against their religion. He got to be so open about who he was and got his life back together again. (Chastity,1998)

Moving away from home and living independently, if achieved at the appropriate time, sometime after age eighteen, is considered to reflect both emotional and economic maturity (Cote & Allahar, 1994). Leaving home prior to this is considered to be running away and is evidence of storm and stress or family dysfunction (Arnett, 2000).

I lived on my own from the time I was fourteen. I signed off any

right to my parents support so that I could get social assistance. I always felt more mature than my peers because I was paying my own bills and buying my own groceries and they were living at home and complaining about their parents. (Elton,1998)

Youth whose parents expect them to do well, live up to those expectations and consequently it is believed that parents also influence independence and self-reliance, persistence, social skills, and responsibility (Baumrind,1991; Fuligni & Eecles, 1993; Robinson, 1995; Steinberg, 2000).

He was very quiet. He came from a family where they never watched tv and he could only have friends from his church. Never any sleep-overs and they [parents] picked his clothes. But he was gay anyway. (Chastity,1998)

Authoritative parents are reported as having the most favourable effects on academic achievement of youth because of high expectations to which youth respond (Bronstein, 1997; Steinberg, 1996). Authoritarian parents, those who are demanding and punishing, often have a negative impact (DeBaryshe, Patterson, & Capaldi, 1993; Dornbusch etal., 1987; Melby & Conger, 1996). Parents are rarely differentiated in these studies by gender, even though Youth Studies emphasizes the importance of children and youth modelling appropriate gender 'roles' for proper maturation.

My real father was very violent. He used to beat me up. He was in the military. My mother finally left him but then she just fell apart. My sister and I took care of my mother. (Virginia, high academic achiever,1998)

My dad used to get so angry and really went overboard. My mother would be screaming at him to stop because he had gone too far. That's why they ended up separating...because of my father's violence. (Michel, mediocre academic achievement, 1998)

My father was really very physically abusive. (Elton, high academic, music and athletic achievement, 1998)

I hated my father. He was well, emotionally abusive and I just hated him in my life (Rupaul, high to medium achievement,1998)

Not only does Youth Studies represent youth as undifferentiated, good parents are those who parent in a traditional family, thus also producing the majority of families as dysfunctional. The majority of youth turn out to be 'normally' gendered and heterosexual

regardless of the kind of family unit they come from. Queer youth come from a range of family types as well. As the youth voices in this text indicate, some of these youth are from heterosexual, nuclear families while others are from families with one parent, or a biological parent and a step-parent. Identifying a particular kind of youth as a problem and then tracing this 'problem' back onto family configuration and parents as the cause of the problem does not account for the range of discourses in addition to family that impact on youth. Youth Studies has little to say, for example, about the effects of popular culture on youth subjectivities.

The Influence of Peers and Friends

Youth Studies discuss the role of peers and friends in the lives of youth in relation to influence and socialization. According to Youth Studies, peers are those who are about the same age and consist of a large network of classmates, community members and co-workers (Arnett, 2000; Rice, 1999).[8] Friends are those from the same age group with whom youth develop a valued, mutual relationship (Arnett, 2000). Implicit is that parents and other adults are not friends.

Arnett (2000) reports that the 'progression to maturity' marks a change in quantity and quality of time youth spend with parents versus friends. The level of warmth and closeness between youth and parents is said to typically decline as youth move away from the social world of their families and become increasingly involved with their friends. One study of teenagers aged thirteen to sixteen indicated that the average time spent with parents was twenty-eight minutes daily while the average time with friends was one hundred and three minutes daily (Buhrmester & Carbery, 1992). According to this study youth depend more on friends than on parents for companionship and intimacy.

> **I have one friend now and I love her dearly. She is the first person to accept me for who I am. She said, "Don't worry about it Rupaul, because I will protect you" and "if anyone says anything I will tell them off." And she did do that, because people were still calling me fag and stuff in grade twelve. She would scream at them. (Rupaul, 1998)**
>
> **I have always been popular and had lots of friends. (Chastity, 1998)**
>
> **My best friend is a girl. All the boys tease me. They always have. (Oscar, 1997)**

This trend is related to the function of schooling in industrialized societies as children and youth spend the better part of a typical day in school with peers but supervised by adult

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[8]Technically peers are equals but the Youth Studies literature conflates peers and co-evals.

educators. Youth time outside of school is less supervised by adults.

Whereas the literature reports that youth spend increasingly more time with friends of the opposite sex in the final stages of normal psychosexual development (Miller, 1990), earlier stages of childhood are measured as normal when children prefer to play and spend most of their time with same-sex children (*DSM IV*).

> **I always preferred playing with the girls. We had more in common. (Jack, 1997)**

> **I was one of the boys for most of my childhood. I was a bigger and better bully than any of them could be so I think it was survival instinct for them. Me, I just liked the things they did better. (Jill, 1998)**

> **I was fairly involved in athletics and I was starting to become very popular. I mean with the girls. The girls all loved me. I guess because I wasn't a threat to them. I wasn't going to hit on them. I wasn't going to do anything to them. I was quite content in the relationship [with Fred] that I was in at the time. (Elton, 1998)**

> **I finally had a friend. She was my very best friend and we would go shopping and talk about fashion and makeup. (Rupaul, 1998)**

> **My best friend in high school was this guy named Alex. We talked about everything and he helped me come out. (Chastity, 1998)**

Peer influence is reported as greater than parents' influence in relation to school and schoolwork. For example, Midgely & Urdan (1995) indicate that, if friends like school and schoolwork, this influences how consistently teens attend class, how much time they spend on homework, how hard they try in school, and the grades achieved. There is considerable attention in Youth Studies paid to the influence of peers and friends who have a negative attitude to schooling (Arnett, 2000). For example, low achievers with high-achieving friends tend to have improved grades over time and are more likely to plan to attend post-secondary school.

> **I did have about three other friends in that group. Like, I don't know if they were the best people for me to hang out with because they were into drugs and stuff. But, basically, what group am I going to attract with my background, except these troubled kids, right? Like I am not going to attract the student president or her friends or anything....people who come from normal backgrounds. So basically I attracted these kids who were bad and did drugs. (Rupaul, 1998)**

Another study found that teens who are more concerned with what friends think about them perform more poorly in school (Fuligni & Eccles, 1992).

> **I managed to keep my grades at a level that was pretty high. And in grade ten I did this as well, when I was isolating myself...and in grade eleven. But as soon as I made friends, it seemed like I didn't care anymore because they influenced me. They didn't care about school at all. So, I decided to hell with it, I hate it too....I want a social life finally. I want to do things. So basically I put all my energy into social functions and forgot about school. (Rupaul,1998)**

> **I was an honour roll student throughout all my school years. I was always well beyond the level of my school year and peers. School actually become very boring and very redundant and very repetitive for me, right up until about grade 10. I mean it was easy to flip right through. (Elton, 1998)**

Socializing with friends and peers is the most common daily activity of youth in euorwestern cultures (Arnett, 2000). The amount of time spent socializing is related to grades in school. The more time spent socializing, the lower grades in school (Arnett, 2000). Having friends who denigrate school is reported as lowering school success even for teens with authoritative parents (Brown, 1993; Steinberg, 1996).

> **When I found my first friend my marks took a nose dive, I was an honour student up to then, I even skipped a year. I didn't have time for school because I had a friend for the first time....ever. Having Madonna in my life was the best thing that ever happened for me. (Rupaul, 1998)**

A study conducted by Youniss & Smollar found that youth preferred to discuss more intimate matters--those involving sex, problems with sex, and feelings about the 'opposite sex'-- with friends and not parents (1985, p. 294). Youth have considerable influence on their peers in the regulation of gender and sexuality as does the popular culture produced for youth, yet Youth Studies has little to say about how the imperative to conform to gender and sexuality expectations is used by youth to police conformity.

> **But to them I seemed effeminate. I had a lot of girlish mannerisms and stuff. And, I talked like a girl is what they said.....I enjoyed girls' company more...they [boys] would call me sissy and girl and stuff and in junior high they actually called me faggot. (Rupaul, 1998)**

Arnett refers to "neglected adolescents lack[ing] the social skills necessary for making friends" and "friends [as] the source not only of adolescents' most positive emotions but also of their most negative emotions–anger, frustration, sadness, and anxiety" (2000, pp.246, 227) but he does not explore the social conditions giving rise to these emotions. Given that Youth Studies emphasize the decreasing influence of parents and other adults on youth, the lack of attention to the social conditions within which youth influence each other is a conspicuous absence.

Youth who do not conform to gender rigid expectations are policed by family, schools, and peers and friends (Bartky, 1990; Burke, 1996; Scholinski, 1997). Gender conformists internalize the imperative to be a proper girl or boy, thus becoming their own disciplinarian (Bartky, 1990).

> **We giggle and shop together. We both love makeup and clothes. We borrow clothes and shoes and makeup tips back and forth. We have the same hairdresser, a gay man. (Rupaul, 1998)**

Young males are encouraged by male peers to act as heterosexual predators in the hunt for the next female virgin and to bully or denigrate homosexuality as further proof of their heterosexuality (Whateley, 1991).

> **There were a lot of guys that I knew were gay or bisexual because I would see them out places and of course I never outed anyone....but they were afraid to talk to me because they would feel like they were outed, to the other guys, that everyone would know they were gay, if they associated with me...because I was so out and so gay. Nobody ever approached me about being gay. (Elton, 1998)**

> **They would call me a faggot and sissy. (Oscar ,1997)**

Popular culture such as teen magazines, movies, music, and music videos play a significant role in the representation of gender and sexuality to young people. Films directed at youth often depict male youth as hormone driven creatures (Whatley, 1991). Young males are cast as biologically driven and out of control, thereby reinforcing storm and stress and irrationality models of youth. Young females are depicted as morally superior unless they are heterosexually active in which case they are viewed as promiscuous and, therefore, morally bad. These films typically include male 'nerds' who are sexually immature and innocent. Whatley claims that youth viewing these films long to assume these forms of subjectivity, and come to expect these behaviours from their peers and friends.

> **He fits the stereotype. He is very feminine. He plays the piano. He's gay. (Chastity,1998)**

I had really long hair and earrings and I swished around the halls....but I could beat any one of them up so everyone just started accepting me...I actually became pretty popular once I could beat the bullies up....I think I began to conform to guy stuff even if I looked like a flaming queen. (Elton, 1998)

Female heterosexual activity is considered to be a problem behaviour in Youth Studies because of its manifestation in teenage pregnancy and single parenting (Arnett, 2000; Rice, 1999).

I was never going to get pregnant having sex with other girls. (Jill, 1998)

Youth, like parents, are effective in enforcing and controlling each others' behaviour. Individual youth unable or unwilling to conform to expectations are disciplined by peers and friends through name-calling, teasing, bullying, and shunning.

Thank God she [mother] never gave me an Indian [India] name. My brother has an Indian name and the other kids tease him about that. It's bad enough being called a sissy and fag but if they knew my background things would be much worse. (Rupaul, 1998)

If I touched the ball, they would back away and refuse to touch it after me. They said the ball was contaminated. (Jack, 1997)

They would squeeze up against the wall in the hallway so they wouldn't touch me. They were nowhere even near me. (Oscar, 1997)

In extreme cases, policing of youth behaviour by other youth is done with violence, even murder. The murder by other youth of Reena Virk, an Asian girl from a Jehovah Witness background is one such extreme example of the policing of difference. Reena Virk attempted to conform to the expectations of her peers but was unable to because of her size, colour, and comportment. While media attention has primarily focussed on the violence of the killers, the role of other peers in disciplining Virk for her appearance and non-conforming behaviours has been given little print attention. Adult response to violence toward non-conforming peers is often dismay in what is perceived to be an increase in youth violence.[9] While Reena Virk's murder is an extreme example of policing

[9]Media coverage of Virk, as well as that of Taber, Alberta, and Littleton, Colorado is replete with adult concerns about youth violence with little attention paid to the gender and sexuality policing that occurs among youth.

nonconformity, violence is a way for youth to influence others' behavior.

> **The three years of junior high were the worst of my life...it was just terrible because I tried to deny it to myself. And they called me gay and fag and stuff. It seemed so hurtful. I guess because that is the age when kids are the most vulnerable. You know the pre-teens and then going into teenager and whatever. And I**
>
> **had absolutely no friends for those years. I got picked on constantly. (Rupaul, 1998)**

According to Chakkalakal (2000), Reena Virk's death is a Canadian lynching, signalling the racism of this action and the refusal of mainstream media to investigate this racism. Despite her best efforts, Virk's bodily morphology, comportment, and colour did not match expectations for a heterosexually conforming girl.

> **People thought I was Mexican..they would say "you smell like burritos".....but because I was brought up to learn English and to live in America and I have a white name. I am completely white....No one has every guessed that I was East Indian, because I wanted to be pure white. White people don't get any name calling, barely. Kids like me get called Paki and stuff and I just didn't want to be one of them, I just wanted to be pure white. (Rupaul, 1998)**

Virk was alleged to have attempted to have sex with another young woman's boyfriend. This action was derided as ridiculous because of her appearance but also taken seriously since it undermined another young woman's heterosexual relationship. When Virk refused to (could not) conform or go away, her peers moved beyond the everyday regulatory mechanisms of gender and sexuality and, in punishment, she was murdered.

Reena Virk was represented in the media as complicit in her own death because she did not stay away from those who victimized her. Social science research on youth would further pathologize her. This research would identify her as someone suffering from low self-esteem because she had few peers and no friends. Her attempts to find belonging would be evidence of her lack of social skills. Her family would be regarded as dysfunctional since she no longer lived with her parents. And, it is likely that her parents would be blamed for providing inappropriate gender role modelling given her gender deviant appearance.

Youth Studies focus on the idea that adolescents depend more on peers and friends for companionship and intimacy, individualizing violent regulation by peers as instances of unchecked emotions like anger, frustration, sadness, and anxiety (Arnett, 2000, p. 227). Youth violence is not recognized as another way in which gender and sexuality nonconformity is policed in this culture.

She was a girl and she always like, hit me on the head and stuff. She told me, "Do you know why I hate you?" I said, "No." She said, "Because you are gay. And nobody likes gay people. And that's why you have no friends." (Rupaul, 1998)

And I am still kind of embarrassed to tell them [peers] her name because it is so East Indian (Rupaul, 1998)

I was so glad when my foster mother adopted me and gave me her last name. So I didn't have to fight anymore. I always had to fight and beat up people because of my last name, it was the name of an animal and they [peers] would call me and my little brothers and sisters names because of it. (Jill, 1998)

Rather than individualize and psychopathologize Virk and others like her, what is needed is a consideration of the regulatory role of peers.

Youth as a Period of Prolonged Dependency: Schooling & Transition from School to Work

A significant area of study within contemporary Youth Studies relates to schooling and the transition from school to work. This research examines the implications for youth of schooling as a state-sanctioned institution in relation to the social control of youth in schools.

I isolated myself for about two years when I went into high school, grade ten and eleven. I isolated myself because I was so hurt from junior high and I went to this school with eighteen hundred kids for high school, right. I thought, great, I can hide and no one will know me. People just thought I was weird or something. So it worked out that in the long run it was really hurtful to me to be so isolated at school. Like, I basically went crazy because I had no social contacts. (Rupaul, 1998)

The transition from school to work literature is concerned with the incidence and explanation of social inequalities (Griffin, 1993).

I hated school. I could hardly wait to quit. Not much in school ever connected with me. (Jill, 1998)

We were always so poor. I hated being poor all the time and school just made this worse...because of the other kids. (Rupaul, 1998)

When school inequalities are considered, attention is given to lower and working class youth, youth from racialized groups other than whites (Hemmings, 1998; Price, 1999; Steinberg, 1996), and gender, particularly girls (Sommers, 2000; Bianchi & Spain, 1996 Arnett, 2000d; Evans, 1992).

> **I mean that was another thing that really damaged my self-esteem, my whole life is that we were poor. I used to be so embarrassed to have friends come over. I still do because we live in this shack, in these cheap apartments, and I am embarrassed about it. (Rupaul, 1998)**

Premised on the assumption that youth have prolonged dependency within heteronormative families, schooling and transition from school to work research examines school drop-out, exceptional students, under-achievement, over-achievement, effective achievement factors, peer influence, characteristics of effective schools, effective class size, effective teachers, school transition from elementary to junior or senior schools, school climate and transition to work (Arnett, 2000; Rice, 1999).

> **I kinda think that I am going to be average, because I gave up [on school] ....maybe it will take time for me to get motivated again. (Rupaul, 1998)**

Arnett (2000) found in his research that the best teachers like the best parents are authoritative.

> **There was no intervention, when things like that [verbal harassment] happened, with teachers. Sometimes teachers were pretty rude too. (Rupaul, 1998)**

Most of the literature on achievement is heavily influenced by psychologisms like motivation, engagement, self-esteem and resilience (Arnett, 2000; Rice, 1999).

> **My friends say that I come across as a snob, but it is because I am putting up defences. You know, because of my low self-esteem. So, I think that is why I come off as a snob. It is not that I don't want people to approach me. I think that maybe others like me suffer from the same problem [low self-esteem], a lot of them. (Rupaul, 1998)**

Social inequality issues are discussed in relation to socioeconomic, gender and racial factors (Arnett, 2000; Rice, 1999). Sexuality as an area of social inequality is rarely examined by mainstream research.

Yeah, but I was always interested in reading a lot. And like I don't mean to sound egotistical but I guess I am pretty intelligent. Because I skipped a grade and I always managed to be top in my class. In elementary I won a lot of contests within the school district. I knew about gay people cause I used to sit in the library and read about it when I was ten and eleven. (Rupaul, 1998)

The idea that an effective school would be a school in which queer youth would be valued and safe in their learning environments receives little notice. Instead, chilly climates are related to a perceived increase in youth violence.

Well, before grade ten, I would just fight back. In grade eight, I didn't fight back. I just let them beat me up. So they would still beat the crap out of me but they would leave with some bruises. And finally I said this is just stupid and I started to become a jock. I became very athletic and very strong and I started winning fights. In grade eleven was the last fight that I ever got into about my sexuality. He was huge and he called me a faggot, he was in grade twelve. But I remembered someone telling me that somebody who is big moves slow. If you take their legs out, they move slower. So that was the first thing I did was that I kicked his knee backwards. I actually ended up fracturing his knee so he only had one good leg to move around on. Then I broke a couple of ribs and busted his nose and split his lip and gave him a black eye. Technically he won the fight. He hit me once, open handed across the head, knocked me clear sailing. I was out for about a minute. But, if it were a real fight in a ring, I mean he won. But, I mean that day, I won. Because I never had to fight again. (Elton, 1998)

Well, there was one girl and she would do lots of it [kicking me]. She was like this bully to lots of people. And everyone was scared of her, so I got picked on a lot by her. And she would like hit me on the head. Really hard, so that I would get a head-ache. Stuff like that. (Rupaul, 1998)

When other factors fail to explain the perceived increase in school violence, storm and stress theories and the related irrationality of youth can be pulled in as fall-back positions.

Research on schooling in Youth Studies is concerned with the preparedness for work of young people coming out of schools. Steinberg (1996) indicates, for example, that youth coming out of schools are ill-suited for the workforce.

I like pressure. I always get the job done and do lots of volunteer work in my school. I am on the student council and am organizing the grad this year. Also I am on the yearbook committee. (Chastity, 1998)

Concerns for the adequacy of Western education in the preparation of youth for adult employment can be traced to the successful launch of Sputnik into space by the then USSR. Both the U.S. education system and the youth prepared by this system were assessed to be inadequate in scientific and mathematical rigour for successful competitiveness in the race to space (Arnett, 2000; Rice, 1999).

In the 1960s and 1970s, education was criticized for being too far removed from real life. 'Relevance' became the buzzword and a focus on workplace skills, experience and occupational training became important (Arnett, 2000). Throughout the last half of the twentieth century, youth were largely seen as a major obstacle in academic achievement. A major American study conducted by Steinberg (1996) stated that

> [u]nfortunately, engagement is the exception rather than the norm in the school experience of American adolescents. Research indicates that a remarkably high proportion of adolescents not only fall short of an ideal of engagement, but are strikingly disengaged during their time in school, "physically present but psychologically absent". (p.67)

So serious is this disengagement that Steinberg felt compelled to provide the following summary statement of his study:

> Today's students know less, and can do less, than their counterparts could twenty-five years ago. Our high school graduates are among the least intellectually competent in the industrialized world. . . .the achievement problem we face in this country is due not to a drop in the intelligence of our children, but to a widespread decline in children's interest in education and their motivation to achieve in the classroom; it is a problem of attitude and effort, not ability. (1996, pp. 183-184)

Nostalgia for one's own generation deflects attention away from the social conditions of schooling that many youth experience as intolerable obstacles to achievement.

I hated school. Nothing was very interesting and none of the teachers liked me, not even one. (Jill, 1998)

Schooling was, and still is, far removed from the lives of many youth who resist the social control of not only the schooling system but the social conditions that they encounter there.

I was always an honour student until grade eleven. (Rupaul, 1998)

I was sixteen. I graduated early. I concentrated on my studies because I wanted to finish. I finished grade 11 and grade 12 in the same year. (Elton, 1998)

Mainstream Youth Studies pays little to no attention to the social conditions queer youth encounter in schools. They are rendered invisible in educational theory and practice.

Cote and Allahar (1994), write from within an interdisciplinary focus with an emphasis on political economy about the prolonged dependency of youth in contemporary Canadian life. This period effectively keeps youth out of the competition for jobs, an effect necessary for capitalist democracies until recently with the demand for cheaper labour in the face of globalization. When youth are in the labour force, they work for low pay at low skilled jobs in the service industry. Taking up Erikson's notion of moratorium, Cote and Allahar (1994) contend that youth are produced as citizens whose basic rights to work are placed in abeyance to satisfy legal and societal requirements (1994). Cote and Allahar recognize the ways in which gender impacts on schooling and transition from school to work but they fail to recognize that gaining independence after the transition from school to work often confounds what is thought to be typical of youth.

By this point I was my own guardian. I was just my own guardian. I signed a release form when I turned sixteen that released my parents from any responsibility to me. I had to do that in order to continue going to school. By the time I was sixteen, I was very established in who I was. I was very strong. (Elton, 1998)

By grade 11, I was extremely flamboyant. I mean, I had long hair. I had both ears pierced. I would swish down the hallway. (Elton, 1998)

Research in schooling and transition from school to work, like other research in mainstream Youth Studies, neglects the experiences of queer youth whose voices expose the inadequacy of a monolithic category 'youth' for people of this age.

Externalizing & Internalizing Problems

Arnett explains that "a variety of problems are more common in adolescence and emerging adulthood than at other periods of life" (2000, p. 396). These problems are referred to as internalizing and externalizing problems. Internalizing problems occur when youth turn distress inward, toward themselves. These problems include suicide, depression, anxiety, and eating disorders. The literature tends to group these problems

together and indicates that they are more common among females. In a study conducted by Petersen (1993), thirty-five percent of teens polled reported they had been depressed at some point in the previous six month period. This is significantly higher than rates of depressed mood for either children or adults. Arnett (2000) reports that depression is the leading internal problem of youth. Youth suffering from internalizing problems are said to be over-controlled by parents who maintain tight psychological control (Barber, Olsen, & Shagle, 1994).

Externalizing problems are those behaviours that are turned outward. Externalizing problems are reported as including delinquency, fighting, substance use, risky driving and other risky behaviours, and unprotected sex (Arnett, Bachman et al., 1991; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Williams, 1998).

> **I had to struggle with how to describe myself for the youth leadership competition. I said I'm a risk taker. She was looking at grad and how there are so many jobs to get done and how I took this challenge on. I like a challenge. I'm always trying to help other people. I try my best to be there. I put other people ahead of myself. I snowboard and have done that for nine years. I play basketball. I quit basketball because everyone was always yelling and never satisfied so I didn't want to do that. (Chastity, 1998)**

Externalizing problems tend to be taken up together as well, and the literature associates these problems with under-controlled male youth whose parents are somewhat absent in parental monitoring (Barber, Olsen, & Shagle, 1994).

Unprotected sex is a special category of an externalizing problem. The riskiness of this behaviour has effects ranging from sexually transmitted diseases to pregnancy and single parenthood. Debates about providing sex education for young people range from adult denial of the necessity of this information to highly biological how-to models of heterosex and reproduction (Adams, 1997; Silin, 1995; Moran, 2000; Whatley, 1991). Sex education for youth is not meant to turn into an actual practice. The concern is to help youth understand reproductive sex and marriage and not necessarily safe or even safer sex.

> **I am from a very big French Canadian Catholic family so you-they are very anti-safe sex. They had lots of kids, all of them. My mother is sure I have AIDS because I am gay. (Elton, 1998)**

The political and moral anxieties of each era has found its way into sex education curricula (Adams, 1997; Moran, 2000).

> **Sex ed was a big, bad joke. The teachers could not handle it. No one took it seriously and there was no mention of anything to do with being gay....just some stuff on HIV/AIDS. (Greg, 1998)**

Not fulling informing youth about safer sex because of adult conviction that youth is a time for a moratorium on sex is potentially deadly for youth. Patton (1995) underscores the urgency of this in the following:

> By 1990, over 10,000 people under the age of twenty-five had been diagnosed with AIDS, with probably ten times that number infected with HIV (Boyer and Kegeles 1991:2). Medical experts now believe that it takes an average of ten years from date of infection until serious symptoms occur; thus, most of these some 110,000 HIV-infected young people contracted HIV as teenagers. In the crucial first decade of the epidemic, some attention was devoted to instilling in young people a sense of tolerance toward people living with AIDS. Tragically, moralistic attitudes about sex combined with racism and homophobia . . . delay[s] identification of young people as significantly at *risk* and desperately in need of risk-reduction education. (p. 338)

I was waiting to meet a friend in a park downtown and this guy comes over to me asks me what I am doing here and what my name is and whether I am gay. Then, he asked me to come to the bathroom with him, so I said okay and I went and I had sex in this public bathroom downtown. I never met him before but he knew I was gay. (Rupaul, 1998)

Research indicates that youth suffering from both internal and external problems have especially difficult family backgrounds (Arnett, 2000; Rice, 1999). Queer youth often have difficult family backgrounds; indeed physical, psychological, or emotional migration away from one's birth home due to family rejection, a form of diaspora,[10] is a common theme throughout queer life narratives.

My father was very physically violent toward me. (Rupaul, 1998)
My father was really very physically abusive. (Elton,1998)
My mother always criticises me for everything, she always tells me to stop acting like a girl, to be ashamed of myself. (Rupaul, 1998)

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[10]Heterosexism and homophobia produce a diasporic like migration to queer meccas in large urban centres like Vancouver, B.C., Canada; Sydney, Australia; and San Francisco, USA and the creation of gay ghettoes. Queer folk are under-represented in rural areas and over-represented in larger urban centres. The longing for family is manifest in this quest for and migration to community. Even where queer folk do not migrate physically far away from home, sense of self as a valued and desired member of family is gravely disturbed by the heterosexist and homophobic culture surrounding individuals. These are significant themes throughout the life histories of each queer youth in this study. Their longing for home, family, belonging, and a sense of place was a poignant and sorrowful part of their life journey.

Yet queer youth are not mentioned within mainstream Youth Studies as at risk of either internal or external problems (Arnett, 2000; Rice, 1999).

Suicide, a behaviour related to depression, is the most disturbing problem behaviour reported in youth studies. One in three youth report having suicidal thoughts (Arnett, 2000). One in six youth report a suicide attempt (Rice, 1999). This literature reports that, next to car accidents, suicide is the second most common cause of death among people aged fifteen to nineteen.

Koopmans (1995) refers to the significant body of empirical research that suggests that suicide is associated with family processes. Henry (1993) indicates that suicidal youth come from disturbed family backgrounds and according to Wade (1987), there may be a great deal of conflict between youth and parent(s) as well as parental violence or negative and rejecting attitudes toward youth. The absence or loss of one or both parents or abandonment by the father is reported as significant (Tishler, 1992). Stivers (1988) found that those who attempt suicide have trouble communicating with significant adults around them and do not feel close to any adults. Emotional support from parents and other adults, when needed, is reported as lacking for suicidal youth (Dukes & Lorch, 1989). Three common characteristics of college youth who had thoughts of suicide were identified as having poor relationships with parents, poor relationships with peers, and a conviction of personal helplessness regarding the future (Lester, 1991).

The best predictors of youth suicide attempts are said to be social isolation and loss of or low family support (Morano, Cisler & Lemerond,1993). Multiple studies link suicide with some form of mental illness including depression (Paluszny, 1991). Symptoms include hallucinations, guilt from voices directing them toward external aggression, and substance abuse (Rich, 1990). Suicide attempts are also linked to stress from lower self-esteem, and poor quality friendships (Peck, 1987).

Psychological studies categorize suicidal youth as having immature personalities with poor impulse control and lacking a positive ego-identity development (Bar-Joseph & Tzuriel, 1990). Positive ego-identity, according to the Erikson model, is necessary for feelings of self-worth, meaningfulness and purposefulness. Other studies show that suicidal youth are highly suggestible in following the directions and examples of others (Hazell, 1991).

Information on queer youth is absent from the mainstream Youth Studies on suicide. Tidy little boxes in textbooks list a variety of other warning signs for youth at risk but sexual identity is not one of them (Arnett, 2000; Rice, 1999). The absence is glaring given the information available on gay youth suicide. One Alberta study found that gay youth in particular, are fourteen times more likely to commit suicide than any other group of youth (Bagley & Tremblay, 1997).

> A connection between suicide and homosexuality has long been recognized in the popular culture, reflected in music (e.g., "The Ode to Billie Joe"), movies (e.g., *The Boys in the Band*), theater (e.g., Hellman's *The Children's Hour*), and other art forms. Yet, few researchers have ventured to explore the link between sexual orientation and self-injury. Early

> evidence of an association appeared as incidental findings in studies of adult sexuality. They revealed that gay men were much more likely to have attempted suicide than heterosexual men and that their attempts often occurred during adolescence. Newer studies have provided consistent evidence of unusually high rates of attempted suicide among gay youth, in the range of 20-30 precent, regardless of geographic and ethnic variability. (Remafedi, 1994, p. 1)

Given the myriad of risk factors listed for suicide in mainstream Youth Studies, it is truly astonishing that there is no mention of the impact of nonconforming sexuality. What perhaps is most poignant about this absence is that the biggest risk factor for suicide by queer youth may well be living in a heterosexist and homophobic family and culture. While some researchers decry suicide as an act of aggression expressed inwardly against self, they also suggest that successful suicide is actually an extreme outwardly act directed at loved ones and society (Lester, 1999). Queer youth simply get the message they should not exist which is writ large elsewhere and everywhere. To blame the victim for acting on a message received over and over again, is yet another action of aggression.

According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services suicide is the *leading* cause of death for lesbian and gay youth (1989).[11]

> **They gave out lots of information on youth suicide [at the session] because it is such a big thing for gay and lesbian youth. But no one at school seems to know much about this. My mum was surprised at first but not after reading all the stuff she got at the convention. (Chastity, 1998)**

Other studies (not from mainstream Youth Studies) affirm the deadliness of attempted suicide and suicide for queer youth (Bagley & Tremblay, 1997; Gibson, 1994; Herdt et al, 1993; Hershberger et al, 1997; Kourany, 1987; O'Connor ,1995; Remafedi, 1994; Remafedi et al, 1991; Rofes, 1983; Rotheram-Borus, 1991; Schneider et al, 1989; Shafer, 1996).

> **Once a year, just like I get raped once a year. I try to kill myself once a year...like clock work for the last 8 years. (Jill, 1998)**

Young, gay males have been studied the most.

> **I just couldn't take it any more. I tried to kill myself. (Michel, 1997)**

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[11]The statistics and study of suicide within other minority groups of youth tell a similar story. Aboriginal youth, for example, have the highest rates of suicide for racialized groups in the United States. (National Centre for Health Statistics, 1999; Grossman, Milligan & Deyo, 1991).

In a random survey of seven hundred and fifty Calgary men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-seven, the incidence of a serious suicide attempt is fourteen times greater for gay men than for any other group (Bagley & Tremblay, 1997). Studies report that most atttempts of suicide by gay males occur before the age of twenty when conflict at home and with one's self was most intense (Rofes, 1983).

Sometimes I get so depressed. I am afraid of having what she [mother] has....bipolar stuff. I just want to die so I think about suicide. (Rupaul, 1995)

In a survey of suicide studies, Remafedi and colleagues found "consistent evidence of unusually high rates of attempted suicide among gay youth, in the range of 20-30 percent, regardless of geographic and ethnic variability" (1994, p.7). Given that suicide is now recognized as the second leading killer of all youth in the United States and Canada next to accidents, the astonishing fact about queer youth suicide is the over-representation of queer youth in suicide statistics and *their absence* from mainstream Youth Studies literature (Rice, 1999). Mainstream researchers either completely ignore these studies (Rice, 1999); have special sections on lesbian and gay youth in which risk of suicide is mentioned in passing but not integrated into larger sections on youth suicide (Arnett, 2000); try to foreclose discussion by charging queer researchers with having a political agenda (Remafedi, 1994); or they quibble over numbers (Remafedi, 1994).

The American federally commissioned *Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide* (1989) was almost entirely rejected because of its controversial chapter on gay and lesbian youth (Remafedi, 1994). When the report was finally accepted in its entirety, it was published in a limited printing of three thousand copies only. As Remafedi writes, "important but unfundable topics have a way of never becoming 'serious' science" (1994, p. 8).

One of the major factors in the lives, and suicides, of queer youth is the alienation they feel from the social institutions that most people would turn to in times of crisis. The family, church, and schools all fail to see homosexuality/queerness as a viable human option (Rofes, 1983). Rather than provide support, these institutions are leaders in stigmatizing and regulating homosexuality.

Many families react to queer youth by kicking them out of home. Queer youth are over-represented among the homeless (Brownsworth,1992; 1996). While some empirical studies investigating homelessness ask questions about sexual orientation (Grethel, 1997; Kruks, 1991), much more research needs to be done. Given the dearth of shelter beds[12] for all adolescents, there is virtually nowhere for queer youth to go except the street, when

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[12]A telling indictment of the cultural imperative that youth should live at home is manifest in the lack of funding for youth emergency services like The Youth Emergency Shelter in Edmonton (YES). YES Director Deb Cautley reported during a Sociology of Youth presentation that YES obtains over 60% of its budget through fundraising and begs and borrows many needed items. At a one day workshop I was invited to for youth crisis workers, we learned that there are fewer than twenty shelter beds in the greater Edmonton area designated for youth.

they either leave home or are kicked out. Homelessness often means that education becomes an unlikely option because of the lack of financial support from family.

> **They expect kids to live at home if they go to school. They don't think of kids like me. I could go to school part time I think.....that is all I could afford if I lived on my own. (Rupaul, 1998)**

> **Shane has been out of home since he was fourteen. He is poor. He didn't finish high school but says he doesn't care. (Rupaul, 1998)**

Financial vulnerability and few well-paying job options mean that street youth become involved in social networks composed of other homeless, street people who support themselves by whatever means possible. Homeless female youth are likely exposed to prostitution as a way of earning a living (Perlman, 1990). Prostitution is also a viable option for financially strapped homeless queer youth. The numbers of queer youth who earn a living as sex trade workers is also under-investigated (Coleman, 1989).

Even when youth do stay at home after coming out, they often face harassment, non-acceptance or denial that queer sexuality is a valid choice. They are not safe within their own homes.

> **Basically [I am safe] at my house and Madonna's house.....in my bedroom. Or if my mom is not home. That is it. That is why I hate being home in the evenings. But, I love it when she is not at home. (Rupaul, 1998)**

Disruptions of the Category Youth

The Influence of Margaret Mead

> Reading Margaret Mead's *Coming of age in Samoa* was my introduction, not only to the concept of culture, but to the critique of culture–ours. Before 1961, when I read *Coming of age* in an Introduction to Anthropology course at the University of Michigan, Mead had already done a great deal to popularize the concept of cultural relativity. Her voice had reached into my teenage hell, to whisper my comforting first mantra, "Everything is relative, everything is relative," meaning: There are other worlds, possibilities than suburban California in the 1950s. I was a scholarly minded half-Jew from New York (where I had spent my childhood) and a red diaper baby. I was athletic, hated dating boys, and resented pretending I was less of everything than they were. Neither girls' clothes nor girlish attitudes felt "right" to me. And I was attracted–in some sweaty way that had at first no name–to girls and women. (Newton, 2000 p. 1)

In her landmark book, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, published in 1928, Margaret Mead contested the inevitability of age-stage developmental models for youth. This ethnographical work, like those of Ruth Benedict, Franz Boas, and Claude Levi-Strauss, came out of anthropological paradigms which contested the basic truths of age and stage theories of child and adolescent development from Freud to Erikson. Mead's work was premised on the idea that the influence of a particular culture is crucial in determining the personality and behaviour of a developing individual. Because cultures vary in social institutions, economic patterns, habits, mores, rituals, religious beliefs, and ways of life, culture, according to Mead, is relative. Anticipating work by poststructuralists, Marcus and Fischer (1986), Mead used her ethnographic work in Samoa to form a cultural critique of modern cultural practices of child-rearing in the United States.

Mead's work did not deny that an age period "youth" exists. She did, however, deny that biological arguments were explanatory of the kinds of experiences youth have. Youth experiences were related to the cultural practices around them and were in response to the conditions of dependency on and submissiveness to adults in western, industrialized nations. Socio-cultural context determines the direction of adolescence and, therefore, strongly influences the degree to which youth are welcomed into the adult world. Given the strong and prolonged age separation of youth from the adulthood, Mead argued that youth are *not* welcome in the adult world. Instead youth are heavily discouraged from entering the adult world until they have appropriately developed 'normally' as outlined in Erikson's and other social psychological work. Then, at a specific age, eighteen or twenty-one, youth are abruptly expected to become adults.

Samoan children and youth, in contrast, follow a relatively continuous growth pattern with no abrupt changes from one age to the other. Samoans are not expected to think or behave one way as children, another as youth, and yet another as adults. This is the principle of continuity of cultural conditioning in which there is no abrupt change or transition from one pattern of behaviour to another. Three examples of this principle at work in Samoan culture are the responsible roles of children in contrast to the non-responsible roles of children in Western culture; the submissive role of children and youth in Western culture in contrast to the dominant role of children and youth in Samoan culture; and finally, the similarity of 'sex roles' of children, youth and adults in Samoan culture in contrast to the dissimilar sex roles of children, youth and adults in Western culture.

Mead's observations of Samoan culture convinced her that sexual activity among youth was to be encouraged while reproduction was to be discouraged until youth were older. Multiple parenting and sexual freedom, radically different from the family and sexual role regulations of western societies, opened up possibilities for human lives. In contrast, as youth mature within Western cultures, possibilities for sexual activity are limited. Minimizing the meaning of physical changes, as Samoan culture does, provides a different emphasis and interpretation of those changes. Western cultures, with their preoccupation with physical changes in children and youth, produce particular subject positions for children and youth to occupy that emphasize their distinctiveness from adults.

Mead's work of seventy years ago deconstructs the claim to universality of age-

stage developmental models still so prevalent in the early part of this new century. Her work was and still is very controversial not only because of the implications for social science research on youth and children. Her work implicates western child rearing practices in the production of social problems represented in Youth Studies as a natural and normal part of the maturation of youth. Based on her work in Samoa, Mead believed that rearing children and youth differently would go a long way towards eliminating widespread social problems. While Mead did not use the language of post-structuralism, she made it possible to anticipate a range of youth subjectivities presently limited by a culture that so circumscribes how it conceives of youth.

> Through Margaret Mead I grasped that my adolescent torments over sex, gender, and the life of the mind could have been avoided by different social arrangements. (Newton, 2000, p.1)

It is possible to find other examples of the disruption of the assumption of universal age/stage categories by looking at North American Indigenous cultures. Given the egalitarianism of many Native American cultures, there was no place for arbitrary distinctions based on age or stage of development upon which humans could be differentially valued. North American Indigenous cultures also provide evidence for erotic, gender, and social life that does not follow a heteronormative imperative. Kinsman reminds us that central to the subjugation of Indigenous people before confederation in Canada was "the marginalization and destruction of diverse forms of erotic, gender, and social life" and the subordination to "white, European derived social and sexual organizations" (1996, 92). According to Wilson "two-spirit Indigenous Americans" living in this century cultivate an identity that "affirms the interrelatedness of all aspects of identity, including sexuality, gender, culture, community, and spirituality" (1997, p. 305). She goes on to say that "two-spirit connects us to our past by offering a link that had previously been severed by government policies and actions" (Wilson, 1997, p. 305). While most eurowestern social science produces the "homosexual" as deviant, "traditionally, two-spirit people were simply a part of the entire community" (Wilson, 1997, p. 305). Traditional Native American cultural values, like Samoan values, expose the arbitrariness of age-stage discursive hierarchies of youth as well as the heterosexism of mainstream Youth Studies. Moreover, because the subject positions produced by age-stage discourse were not subject positions for young people in these cultures, the 'problems of youth' linked to these age-stages were not a part of these cultures.

Queer Youth Studies

> The history which bears and determines us has the form of *war* rather than that of a language: relations of power, not relations of meaning. (Foucault, 1980b, p. 114)

> I think a lot about death. That's what comes of living in a war zone. (Brownworth, 1996, p. 215)

During a presentation of my research, an audience member asked how I would deal with queer youth suicide in my work. I puzzled over how I would include queer youth 'voices' of the dead and came to this place, these words, where I write that queer youth who commit suicide are in my work. They are here in their absence and in their silence. They are the ghosts who haunt every letter, every line of what I write. They leave a trace of themselves even if their own life story may never be told, even if individually they remain anonymous to me. These lines, this space is my testimony and tribute to each and every one of them. (Filax, 1999)

Michael Warner wrote that, when "social theory as a quasi-institution for the past century has returned continually to the question of sexuality", it has done so "with an endless capacity to marginalize queer sexuality in its descriptions of the social world" (1994, ix). Prior to undertaking this research I did not, perhaps could not, begin to imagine the extent of this marginalization. It was only when faced with the juxtaposition of mainstream Youth Studies with Queer Youth Studies that I realized that research about queer youth is as inconsequential to research about youth as queer youth are to a community's understanding of itself.

Queer youth are produced, through their absence, or as a special area of interest, as the abject other, that is as the deviant outsider to Youth Studies. Queer youth subjectivity is outside the limits of the category youth created by Youth Studies. There is, however, a large but separate body of research that takes the lives of queer youth seriously. Some of this research I have already referred to in the previous section on youth suicide. Queer Youth Studies pays attention to issues, like coming out narratives, significant in the lives of queer youth. There is an acknowledgement that queer youth negotiate their sexuality in much different ways with parents and other adults than do non-queer youth. Strommen (1989) notes that many parents are often deeply dismayed to learn their child is queer and require special support groups to come to terms with this.

I have come out to 25 or 30 people now and none of them knew or guessed. They were all surprised that I am queer. (Chastity, 1998)

There was only one person who figured out that I was gay and I find that pretty shocking but in school I was afraid to be out. Now I have to be careful because my sister might suffer if the kids at school know. (Svend, 1998)

Organizations like Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) offer necessary family support for parents who are trying to come to terms with their queer daughter or son. Parents who can not bear who their children have become meet with one another and talk and grieve their way towards accepting their offspring and themselves as the parents of a queer child. In a homophobic and heterosexist world other options are non-existent.

I think the information session was offered by PFLAG, I am sure that is where my mother got all the information for us. (Chastity,1998)

While PFLAG is often helpful for those family of queer youth who have difficulty coping, hearing tortured lamentations of family members sorrowing over one's sexual orientation is hardly an act of love and acceptance, let alone valuing. Small wonder that queer youth do not easily come out to parents and family.

My mother asked me if I was gay and we sort of talked about it but I did not come out. And she went to a session at the teacher's convention on gay and lesbian youth and brought home all this information. A big folder of information. And I was really uncomfortable but she had got all this information and she was fine with it. There was no problem with it whatsoever and she told my Dad and my Dad doesn't talk as much as my Mum does. I've never had an important conversation with him, ever. But in his own little way, he came down into the tv room and sat on the couch with me...so it was just kind of to say it was okay. (Chastity, 1998)

Queer youth are often caught up in protecting family members from homophobic or heteronormative harm. Fear that siblings will be targets of harassment or that their families will be viewed as dysfunctional figure in many queer youth narratives.

I had to be careful for my younger brothers. (Greg, 1998)
My little sister goes to the same school. (Svend, 1998)
They already thought my family was strange. I wasn't going to let them use my gayness against my sister and mother. (Virginia, 1998)

Mainstream Youth Studies have shown the effects of parental influence on youth. Queer youth in heteronormative families is an unexamined dimension to family dysfunction and negative parental influence in the lives of young queers.

It is just such a relief to be out to my parents. This takes a big load off of me. But there still are so my things I can't talk to them about. At least they know this is who I am. (Chastity, 1998)

Schools reiterate the homophobic and heteronormative message proliferating in silences and exclusions elsewhere. As MacDougall (2000) argues, schools are a major site in teaching heterosexism and homophobia, including the internalized homophobia of queer

youth.

> **I was very homophobic. I was very Catholic. And I played tuba with the provincial symphony on a six weeks benefit tour around the province. There was a young man who was about sixteen years old who was a pianist. He was very flamboyant, very gay. And he was my roommate for the tour. I was very upset and went up to the band leader, the director and I said, "No way, I am not rooming with that faggot." I was twelve at the time and very much denying myself. (Elton, 1998)**

Schools regularly refuse queer youth access to facilities and school events like dances or gay/straight clubs. Given the importance that mainstream Youth Studies attributes to socializing opportunities for friendships and dating purposes, queer youth are seriously disadvantaged by schools.

> **I went to my prom with my lover. I was not sure if it would really happen even though everyone knew. (Elton, 1998)**

Dress codes in schools discourage cross-dressing. Young transgenders, in particular, are disciplined through school dress codes. Most school professionals are reluctant to integrate queer issues into safe and caring schools because of a refusal to deal with controversial issues, a denial that queer youth are in their schools or because they contend that all youth in their school are treated the same. Even so, teachers and other educational professionals are important to queer youth for many of the same reasons they are for 'normal' youth.

Peers and friends, as for normal youth, are equally important in the lives of queer youth but patterns are often different as friends may be opposite or same sex.

> **I didn't actually take a chance until the end of grade eleven to go out and meet and talk to somebody. And then I did and I met this person and she is my best friend now, since then. Like my life changed socially, a lot. (RuPaul, 1998)**

Rarely do queer youth receive historical and cultural knowledge about themselves in school and sex education speaks little about different forms of sexual practice and even more rarely addresses these as valued and different ways of being in the world. When queer youth do encounter materials they are written in the negative.

> **When they used to put the gay stuff in, [sex ed]...it was a joke...it was real quick and like, why do we have to watch this? I didn't want to listen to it because I knew I was gay. I thought if I acted like I didn't care then no one would know. (Greg, 1998)**

There was one book in the library....you know the coping with series? There was one called "Coping with Sexual Orientation? I don't know. I looked in the back of the book and no one had checked it out. See I think because they are scared to go to the library and check books like that out. (Rupaul, 1998)

Smith (1993; 1998) writes about the ideology of "fag" and schools as factories of violence in his research investigating schools in Toronto. Other studies replicate Smith's findings regarding physical and psychological violence toward queer youth in schools (Frank, 1992; Frankfurt, 1999; Hunter, 1990; Khayatt 1994; Quinlivan 1996; Rivers, 1997; Rostow, 1999).

I thought, because I was so lonely and I felt I needed someone, something to help out with how I was feeling. I felt like I was going crazy.....So I thought I am not going to approach anyone in school because I'm scared that they will call me faggot if they hear my voice or anything. (Rupaul, 1998)

Physical education classrooms, especially locker rooms, are horrific places for many queer young males whose gender performance or identity is non-conforming (Griffin, 1993-94).

But the absolute worst was in the gym locker room because there was no supervision or anything. So, I had to change with these guys from my class and you are all in one class together. So, I...it was hell. They taunted me... like it was so severe. (Rupaul, 1998)

In the beginning, I wasn't athletic. I was a chubby kid. For me, phys. ed. wasn't a great thing because, not because of the homosexual thing, but because of my own vision of what my body was. So getting naked with all of these guys who are in pretty good shape and here is chubby Elton, you know getting naked. Then when I was really out and everybody knew, there were some guys who made comments. Like "change with your back to the locker." So phys. ed., in the beginning, was pretty awful. (Elton, 1998)

Other queer males, whose gender performance is more masculine pass through physical education relatively unscathed.

I was a fast ball pitcher and I played volleyball and I was a cross country runner. So I was fairly involved in athletics. (Elton, 1998)

The investigation of chilly climates in schools in mainstream Youth Studies does

not report the homophobia and heterosexism that queer youth encounter in schools and in transit to schools.

> **Basically, I want to save up for a car, because I feel unsafe on transit. In my neighbourhood it is full of teenagers. Waiting for the bus and that, they call me fag and stuff. I just feel scared and I just feel scared riding the transit period. (Rupaul, 1998)**

Under-achievement, over-achievement and school drop-out figure prominently in the lives of queer youth (Savin-Williams, 1994). All three are linked to psychological isolation and alienation, a factor reported over and over in studies on the lives of queer youth (Hunter & Schaecher, 1987; Jesuit Centre for Social Faith & Justice, 1995; Khayatt 1994; Kielwasser & Wolf, 1993-94; Martin & Hetrick, 1988; Martin, 1982; McCue, 1991; Quinlivan, 1996). The notion of safe and caring schools is a farce to many queer youth.

Given the rejection queer youth experience, many are often in crisis. Unlike their 'normal' counterparts, they cannot look to mainstream churches and counselling for help because these are often sites that mandate homophobia and heterosexism.

> **And I talked to my friend Alexander, whose parents are extremely religious...they go to church every day... a Christian fundamentalist...he [friend] doesn't go to church, every time he went to church they told him and everyone how homosexuality was bad and against the wishes of god and everything so...he felt he had to tell his parents because he could not go on going to church knowing that he was who they were talking about. And it's been really, really hard for him. He can't talk to his parents about anything. His mum goes through his room and looks at posters and over-reacts. I'm glad that this is not where I come from. I am glad my parents are not religious like that. (Chastity, 1998)**

The failures of church and psychotherapy to offer support are sad indictments of these helping places.

> **I was raised in a very Catholic family. We went to church all the time. Sometimes, two or three times a week. I was an altar boy. By the time I was twelve years old I was teaching Catechism, which is like Sunday school. My mom worked for the church. We were just a very involved family in the Catholic church. Which, to be a homosexual or to have an alternative lifestyle....was very much against the Catholic beliefs. So when I came out it was pretty devastating to my mom. (Elton, 1998)**

Small wonder that queer youth are so heavily represented in suicide studies and that

substance abuse and risky sexual practices figure strongly in the lives of many young queers (Savin-Williams, 1994; Hunter, 1997). Rather than provide support, too often mental health professionals and religious leaders psycho-pathologize queer youth and continue their victimization instead of protesting this widespread social injustice.

> **If my mom had a choice she would have been marching in that Christian Pride Parade, against me....my mom had a chip on her shoulder, we had no communication whatsoever. She had her Catholic faith and it said I was bad, I was a sinner. I was not going to take that shit. (Elton, 1998)**

The largest risk factor for queer youth is living in a heteronormative world, not their queerness. Responsibility for suicides and risky behaviors needs to be firmly placed within the everyday of dominant discourses of gender and sexuality that so relentlessly marginalize and condemn these young people. Research about queer youth is relatively plentiful, yet ignored in mainstream Youth Studies because the youth are not countenanced and because the researchers, often queer themselves, are dismissed as biassed. The double bind for queer scholars, like myself, is that actively acknowledging our subjectivity places us in a double bind in which we risk not being heard because of our perceived deviance (Halperin,1995). The capacity to marginalize queerness is, indeed, limitless. The representations of mainstream Youth Studies reveal, again, where the bias rests. Remaining silent about these youth is not an option. As Lorde reminded us: "my silences had not protected me" (1984, p. 41).

Polymorphous Sexuality: From Sigmund Freud to Eve Sedgwick

> All theories of adolescent development give sexuality a central place in negotiating the transition from child to adult. The nascent sexual urges which emerge at puberty must be blended with other aspects of teenagers' lives and channelled adaptively. It is especially important that the adolescent be able to integrate his or her sexual feelings, needs, and desires into a coherent and positive self identity, which contains, as one aspect, a sexual self. (Moore & Rosenthal, 1993, p. x)

This quote accurately reflects theories of adolescent development after Freud. According to these theories, adolescent sexuality is proof positive of the storm and stress phase that characterizes youth. This work ignores the radical potential of the early work of Sigmund Freud that recognized that sexuality begins at the beginning of life not at the time of puberty or adolescence. Freud wrote in his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* that

> to suppose that children have no sexual life–sexual excitations and needs and a kind of satisfaction–but suddenly acquire it between the ages of

> twelve and fourteen, would (quite apart from any observations) be as improbable and indeed senseless, biologically as to suppose that they brought no genitals with them into the world and only grew them at the time of puberty. What does *awaken* in them at this time is the reproductive function, which makes use for its purposes of physical and mental material already present. (1972, p. 353)

Freud effectively disrupted discursive notions of sex as reproductive and returned sex to the realm of pleasurable body experience, occurring in plural or "polymorphously perverse"[13] ways from the time of birth onward. His notion of polymorphously perverse forms of sexual pleasure recognizes that there are multiple sexual pleasures present in the early years of all human life that become tamed and restricted into culturally and socially acceptable heterosexual marriage, monogamy and reproduction.

The notion of polymorphous perversion is captured in one of the axioms of queer scholar, Eve Sedgwick. The axiom is that people are different from each other. Sedgwick remarks that despite the array of differences among people, "a tiny number of inconceivably coarse axes in categorization have been painstakingly inscribed in current critical and political thought: gender, race, class, nationality, sexuality orientation are pretty much the available distinctions (1990, p. 23). She goes on to say that, in relation to sexual orientation[14], each of a long list of sexual differences (of which I only partially quote below) has the potential to "disrupt many forms of the available thinking about sexuality" (1990, p. 23).

> Even identical genital acts mean very different things to different people.
>
> To some people, the nimbus of "the sexual" seems scarcely to extend beyond the boundaries of discrete genital acts; to others, it enfolds them loosely or floats virtually free of them.
>
> Sexuality makes up a large share of the self-perceived identity of some people, a small share of others'.
>
> Some people spend a lot of time thinking about sex, others little.

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[13]The terms perverse or perversion for Freud, were not pejorative terms but, instead, were descriptive for all non-reproductive aspects of sexuality (Watney, 1993, 174).

[14]About sexual orientation, Sedgwick comments: [I]t is a rather amazing fact that, of the very many dimensions along which the genital activity of one person can be differentiated from that of another (dimensions that include preference for certain acts, certain zones or sensations, certain physical types, a certain frequency, certain symbolic investments, certain relations of age or power, a certain species, a certain number of participants, etc. etc. etc.), precisely one, the gender of object choice, emerged from the turn of the century, and has remained, as *the* dimension denoted by the now ubiquitous category of "sexual orientation."(1990, p. 8, emphasis added)

> Some people like to have a lot of sex, others little or none.
>
> Many people have their richest mental/emotional involvement with sexual acts that they don't do, or even don't *want* to do.
>
> For some people, it is important that sex be embedded in contexts resonant with meaning, narrative, and connectedness with other aspects of their life; for other people, it is important that they not be; to others it doesn't occur that they might be.
>
> For some people, the preference for a certain sexual object, act, role, zone, or scenario is so immemorial and durable that it can only be experienced as innate; for others, it appears to come late or to feel aleatory or discretionary.
>
> For some people, the possibility of bad sex is aversive enough that their lives are strongly marked by its avoidance; for others, it isn't....
>
> Some people, homo-, hetero-, and bisexual, experience their sexuality as deeply embedded in a matrix of gender meanings and gender differentials. Others of each sexuality do not. (1990, pp. 25-26)

As a way to draw attention to how Youth Studies reduces the differences of young people's lives to caricatures, I close this paper by introducing three queer youth and some of the differences of their lives. I follow each of these introductions, with an account that could have been provided from the Youth Studies literature to explain their lives. I do this to expose the fantastical adult discourse on which the category 'youth' is founded and to, once again, show how attention to the differences of queer youth reveals the limits of this categorization.

Chastity[15]

Chastity lives in a two-parent heterosexual, middle-class, white family. Her parents are professionals and non-religious. Chastity is close to her mother and they talk extensively about everything. Her mother asked her first about sexual orientation and sought out information for Chastity before Chastity came out to her. Chastity reluctantly came out to her mother but, when she did, her mother told her that she loved who she was. Chastity's mother told her father. She loves her father but spends much less time talking with him and does other activities with him, like horseback riding and skiing. Chastity is a highly skilled snowboarder and currently teaches snowboarding. She is an active student in her high school as class president, yearbook committee, and organizer of

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[15]A pseudonym named after Chastity Bono, daughter of famous Hollywood performing duo Sonny and Cher, who became a journalist and out lesbian.

her grade twelve graduation. Her academic achievements at school have been outstanding and she will be attending university. She has been awarded a provincial scholarship coming out of high school for her undergraduate education. Chastity has taken American sign language courses and volunteers using these skills. She is popular within her school with many friends. During grade ten she met Alexander, a gay boy, and came to realize she is a lesbian. She is now actively engaged in the queer community and bar scene. Chastity is the kind of person schools most desire in their student population. It is significant to note that her high school principal stated that no lesbian or gay youth attended his school. While Chastity has never experienced any overt homophobic harassment, she has definitely experienced the overwhelming silence about herself and her community at school.

'Assessment' of Chastity

While Chastity has a good disposition, she has some developing concerns. Her desire to please is extreme and she will do anything to be accepted, including too much student committee work at school. This is evidenced as well, in her excessive volunteerism, most recently with persons with hearing disabilities. She suffers from over-achievement, competitiveness, and aggression, not acceptable for someone of her gender. She is too physically active, engaging in risky sports like snowboarding. She is gender dysphoric and refuses to wear dresses. This may not have been so problematic except that Chastity fell in with a problematic group of peers in grade ten. Under the influence of one particularly poor choice of friend, Chastity now believes she is a lesbian. This is a phase she is going through that will pass when she reaches adult maturity. However, she seems to be proud of this psychopathology, as evidenced in her claim: "I'm here, I'm queer, I'm proud of it". This is likely evidence of the storm and stress period, typical to adolescence, in which she is alienated from the world of adult values.

While, at first glance, it seems that she comes from a normal family environment within a traditional family, her parents are somewhat complicit in her present state of being. Chastity is an only child. As a result, her parents are too indulgent, having failed to check her deviant behaviours thus leaving Chastity at risk of developing into a full-blown homosexual. They show no interest in authorising treatment to alter her gender-dysphoric behaviours. It is difficult to see a happy outcome for Chastity if she continues on the path she is presently taking.

Elton[16]

Elton comes from a two-parent family. His biological father is unknown to him. His stepfather was physically abusive. His mother is Catholic from a large, extended French Canadian family. Elton was an altar boy and attended church regularly until his

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[16]A pseudonym named after Elton John, a flamboyant and out gay performer with many recordings to his name. Elton John wrote "Candle in the rain" in tribute to Marilyn Monroe and is famous for performing this piece at the funeral of Princess Diana.

early teens. He was chubby and non-athletic during his younger years but began to get in shape and play sports when he realized this might help him deal with the constant teasing and bullying he experienced at the hands of other kids. He would fight back but was beaten up badly for his efforts. Becoming more athletic helped him lose weight which made him feel good. Elton is a talented tuba player and won the opportunity to play with the regional symphony on tour for one summer. He met his first lover through this symphony tour. At first he was extremely homophobic but realized over the course of the six weeks that he was physically attracted to the piano player he shared his room with. When he returned home and came out to his mother, he ended up leaving home and living with his first lover for about a year at the age of fourteen. Elton beat his step-father, who baited his mother with the fact that her son is gay. He also beat up a bully at school during grade ten and this checked much of the teasing and bullying at school. At school, he wore his hair long, earrings, and describes himself as swishing around school. Yet, because of his prowess on sports teams and in beating up bullies, he became extremely popular with many peers and friends. He also dated girls and had sex but never relationships with them. Elton was extremely successful academically and maintained honour roll status throughout his schooling years. He worked hard so that he completed two years of high school in one year. He is mostly now estranged from his family. He supports himself as a ward of the state, signing off any parental obligations.

'Assessment' of Elton

Elton is an extremely aggressive young man with an inclination for physical violence. His pathology seems to lie in his deep-rooted hatred of his step-father. This may be linked to his jealousy and possessiveness over sharing his mother as his step-father moved in when Elton was five years old. While Elton is a high achiever, as demonstrated in his schooling, musical and sports achievements, his intellect is overshadowed by extreme moodiness towards others. His mother reports he has a chip on his shoulder and he likes to flaunt his gayness with her. She worries about his lifestyle and the people he associates with but feels like she lost control over him after he went on a six week tour with the symphony the summer he turned twelve. Elton uses his extreme good looks in his quest for new male lovers. His early life without a father figure as a role model has left him prey to the homosexual lifestyle. He is at risk for depression, suicide, substance abuse and HIV/AIDS.

Rupaul[17]

Rupaul lives in a single parent family with two younger siblings. Rupaul is from a mixed ethnic background. His mother is a non-practicing Hindu from India and his father, now dead, was White U. S. citizen. His mother has bi-polar disease and many of her family members including her father have this illness. Rupaul's father was a substance

[17]A pseudonym named after Rupaul, a Hollywood actor, entertainer, and flamboyant drag queen.

abuser and extremely abusive toward Rupaul and his mother. The family lives in poverty. Rupaul was always a very bright student. He cannot remember any time when he was not teased about being too effeminate. He did not have any friends until grade eleven when he met a young dyke to whom he came out. She defends him when other people pick on him. His interest in school has fallen off because he is socially active with his friend who is the first person to ever accept and like him unconditionally. He loves clothes and makeup and wants to be a model. His mother constantly ridicules him because he does not act like a boy or a man. He hates her and his father. He is depressed and has been on Prozac off and on for some time. He is afraid of having bi-polar disease like his mother and is afraid for his physical safety when out either at school or in more public places, including the transit system and walking on the streets. He has been extensively harassed in all these places. He is thankful he has a white name because if people knew his Indian background he is afraid they would torture him more. At one point he documented the harassment he was experiencing at school and reported this to a counsellor who was impressed with his documentation but did little about the harassment. Rupaul may move to Texas where he lived for a time when he was much younger. He has great hopes for finding a supportive community and returning to school with the help of an old family friend who has resurfaced after many years. This friend knows that Rupaul is gay and has offered to help him re-establish and will provide him with a place to stay. Rupaul hopes to shed the pain and sadness he experienced during his growing up years. He hopes to find a place in Texas where he will finally feel safe and accepted.

'Assessment' of Rupaul

Rupaul suffers from low self-esteem, motivation, and resiliency. He is depressed and at risk for the many internal problems of youth including suicide attempts and suicide. Rupaul is gender dysphoric: he is extremely effeminate and lacks any masculine qualities. His effeminacy makes him preoccupied with the way he looks and what he wears. He is too thin and could be anorexic. He lacks appropriate peers and friends. He lacks the appropriate adult role models. He comes from a dysfunctional family who are poor and racially mixed. His father has been absent most of Rupaul's life and was an alcohol and drug abuser who never worked for a living. Rupaul's father was emotionally and physically abusive towards Rupaul and his mother. His mother suffers from a mental disorder and sleeps around with strange men when she is in her manic phase. She is emotionally abusive to Rupaul and constantly criticises him. He has been the primary caretaker of his younger siblings since he was eight years old because his mother is often depressive and has been institutionalized twice. His younger siblings are at risk for deviant and non-conforming behaviours as well.

Rupaul is not interested in school and it is likely that he is on a downward path towards under or unemployment and a cycle of poverty. Increased drug use and casual sex with strangers in public washrooms make him a high-risk candidate for HIV/AIDS. His ongoing problem with low self-esteem and depression make him, as well, a high-risk candidate for suicide attempts and even suicide. His mother is incapable of doing anything

that would be helpful for Rupaul's psychological well-being. We do not predict a happy future for Rupaul nor his siblings.

Sexual Capital: The Contradictions of Exchange and Currency in Queer Youth Lives

> More centrally, one must also understand stories of desire and friendship that persist despite hostile conditions. Such an approach then, requires neither a discussion or refutation of attributes of causality or origin, nor a debate over whether children are sexual. (Britzman, 1995, p. 68)

Drawing on the insights of Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, Britzman, like Linda Singer (1993), takes up the idea of *sexual capital* in order to signal a political economy of sexualities, thereby flagging the need to create theories capable of incorporating the complexity inherent in research about sexuality. For Britzman, 'sexual capital' not only draws attention to processes of normalization that produce heterosexuality, this notion signals something "more transgressive". The notion of 'sexual capital' marks "the lived experiences between and within those forms of sexuality that are valued and exchanged for social acceptance, social competence, pleasure, and power, and, those forms which have no currency *yet still promise pleasure even when they cost social discouragement and ostracism.* (Britzman, 1995, p. 69, emphasis in original)

The stories of the queer youth in this study are not just "painful stories of subjection and pathos" (Britzman, 1995, p. 68), despite heterosexist desire for tales of the psychopathology of queer lives. Rather, these stories are representative of lives of considerable pleasure, even if exchanged for costs that are high. The youth in this study experience pleasure and joy in their lives and they each have suffered many indignities and demoralization. The lives of these young queer people cannot be understood without acknowledging that joy and pain are payment/exchange for each other.

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Social/Legal Production of Sexual Minorities in Canada and the Impact on Education

At the beginning of this new century, some sexual minorities have achieved a status in Canadian law that would have been unthinkable even ten years ago. Bill C23, which passed third reading in the House of Commons on April 11, 2000, covers more than sixty federal statutes that include same-sex and common law couples in federal legislation from income tax provisions and pensions to immigration. To many, Bill C23 signals that sexual minorities have finally been legitimated as full participants in Canadian communities. In this first half of this paper I am interested in asking questions about how legal discourse in particular has produced sexual minority status in this country and, in doing so, how legal discourse has repositioned the boundaries of what are illegitimate sexual minorities, while maintaining all sexual minorities outside the norm. I am, therefore, also interested in exploring how Bill C23 and other laws and legal decisions maintain a notion of 'normal' and 'abnormal' participation in Canadian communities, even as possibilities are opened up for sexual minorities.

In the latter half of the paper, I turn to how legal discourse has impacted education in Canada. These three cases focus on teachers but hold broad significance for understanding how sexual minority youth are produced as outsiders in education practice. I also present three "stories" drawn from ethnographic interviews with queer students in Alberta schools. Each of these could be Charter challenges but for a variety of reasons did not receive the intensive attention necessary to push them into the legal system. In part, this is related to the storytellers' status as 'youth' and the contradictions between the discourses of youth and discourses of homosexuality as these meet in educational settings.

History of the Present

In order to address how discourses of law shape education to maintain normal participation in communities, I conduct what French intellectual, Michel Foucault referred to as a "history of the present" (Foucault, 1979). Foucault was interested in exploring the conditions that make possible present events (Foucault 1972, p. xxii). He was not interested in identifying causal influences but in showing how adjacent events (Said in Bové, 1995, p. 55) "can . . . transform entire domains of knowledge production" (Bové, 1995, p. 60). My focus will be on conditions for the production of sexual minority status in legal discourse in Canada both inside and outside education. Without the achievement of sexual minority status in legal discourse, the legitimation of claims by same-sex partners to benefits previously only available to heterosexual married couples would not have been possible nor would opportunities for sexual minority teachers to legally appeal their treatment in Canadian educational institutions.

First, I consider three conditions of possibility for the present production of sexual minority status in legal discourses: discourses about crime, sin, and illness, discourses of public and private sex and the solidification of group identity, and discourses of equality and freedom of expression in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. There are,

of course, many other conditions that have produced sexual minority identity in Canada. The ones I discuss here are a place to start.

In the sections that follow I outline how the emergence of sexual minority identity in legal discourse in Canada is an effect of various conditions, some legal, some not. In the last parts of this paper I trouble the stability of this status by introducing the notion of queer politics and queers in schools. Before I proceed with this, it is important to say something about 'discourse'. By discourse I mean a regulated system of knowledge supported by social institutions that contain what can be spoken, how it may be spoken about, and who can speak it. Discourses produce positions from which people can speak as well as related social practices. In legal discourse, for example, legislators, judges, and lawyers have particular positions from which they can speak and act that are different from and have more status than what clients or citizens can say or do. Moreover, what legislators, judges, and lawyers talk about and do create social positions for others in a society to occupy: for example, police officer and lawbreaker, citizen and non-citizen, married and never married, public and private sexual activity. In educational discourses, teachers, counsellors, principals, and other professionals involved in schooling have particular positions from which they can speak and act that are different from and have more status than what students or youth can say or do. I am interested in those conditions that have made possible certain ways of talking about and acting in relation to sexual minorities and how this talk and action have created sexual minority categories that only some can occupy.

Discourses of Sin, Crime and Illness

The most important participants in new nations, like that of an emerging Canadian state, was the European, exemplified in the heterosexual family unit. The European's presence was required to ensure successful nation building in the interest of the colonial state (McClintock, 1995). Indigenous peoples were considered to be more primitive, closer to nature, and without culture in contrast to Europeans who considered themselves to be more cultured, farther from nature, and enlightened (Bleys, 1995). Entailed in this construction of Indigenous people as primitive and closer to nature was a view that they engaged in sexually sinful practices that were to be routed out by Christian missionaries. Central to the subjugation of the Indigenous people before confederation was "the marginalization and destruction of their diverse forms of erotic, gender and social life and their subordination to white, European derived social and sexual organizations" (Kinsman, 1996, p. 92).

Non-reproductive sex practised by Indigenous people was considered to be not only sinful but a "crime against nature," even though this claim contradicted other racial discourses which linked native people with nature. Within New France and Upper Canada, to be legally charged with a "crime against nature" could result in death (Kinsman, 1996, 98). Nonnatives engaged in these activities were thought to be contaminated by primitive practices after being too long away from European culture even though this was contradicted by historical evidence from Europe that indicated otherwise. The effect of

nation building in Canada was "to expel from reality the forms of sexuality that were not amenable to the strict economy of reproduction: to say no to unproductive activities, to banish casual pleasures, to reduce or exclude practices whose object was not procreation" (Foucault, 1980, p. 36).

Societies, including those of early Canada, often punished homosexual activity but until the latter part of the nineteenth century, a homosexual group identity was not recognized. 'The homosexual' was introduced as a category of identity when the sexual sciences, including forensic psychiatry, sex psychology, and later sexology began to classify sexual behavior (Kinsman, 1996, p. 58). "The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology . . . the homosexual was now a species" (Foucault, 1980, p. 43). Not only did the sexual sciences produce a group identity where there was none before, the sexual sciences characterized 'the homosexual' as mentally ill.

Europe and North America experienced a shift in the nineteenth century from agrarian, trading societies to urban, industrial societies with capitalism as the dominant form of market enterprise. Capitalist productive relations were premised on the reproductive relations of the heterosexual family (Sayer, 1991). Consequently, capitalism reinforced the primacy of the reproductive family unit already made possible by an anthropological notion of kinship systems which relied on a universal prohibition against incest (Levi-Strauss, 1969), as well as a taboo against homosexuality (Butler, 1990, p. 64). A link made between Anglo-Saxon sexual control and social evolution specific to Victorian moral values, continued to place emphasis on the sexual immorality of "savage" cultures in relation to the believed progress and education away from immorality by the supposedly superior races and civilization (Moran, 2000). Prolonged adolescence combined with chastity featured strongly within this discourse. The emergence of urban industrialized centres in Canada and elsewhere gave rise to public spaces as well as a concentration of people not necessarily bound by family and community in the same way as had occurred earlier in agrarian, rural communities and societies (Kinsman, 1996; Adam, 1995). Urban centres created the possibility for those who wished to engage in nonreproductive sex to gather together, including in public places (Kinsman, 1996; Adam, 1995). Once seen as isolated, individual acts when performed by white people, homosexuality became identified with persons and then with groups as those who engaged in same-sex sexual activity gathered and socialized in public in larger numbers.

In Canada in 1869, "buggery was classified as an 'Unnatural Offence'; in 1892, it was placed under 'offences Against Morality,' where it stayed until the 1950s . . . Gross indecency was introduced into Canadian statute law in 1890 and entered into the first Criminal Code when it was adopted in 1892. It covered all sexual acts between males not already covered by buggery." (Kinsman, 1996, p. 129). In the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, social-purity movements advocated for increased regulation of sexuality in response to prostitution but also in response to the utilization of public space by men seeking sex with other men. Criminal Code classifications were used to direct the police against men engaged in this elicit activity

(Kinsman, 1996, p.127). Thus, a homosexual identity (most often thought of as male) emerged in the first half of the last century from sexology discourse, changing social conditions, "social-purity movements," and a developing legal discourse.

Discourses of Public and Private Sex and the Solidification of Homosexual Identity

The solidification of group status for those who engaged in homosexual acts was profoundly affected by an initiative within British jurisprudence in 1957. The *Wolfenden Report* was concerned with homosexuality as a "large-scale deviation" that needed to be managed. The *Wolfenden Report* made a distinction between public and private homosexual acts which allowed for "a series of public and private classifications within official discourse and practice as a strategy of policing and regulation" (Kinsman, 1996, p. 215).

The public/private distinction linked crimes with the public sphere and established the need to protect the public from homosexual acts. Sins were characterized as those homosexual acts which occurred in private (Kinsman, 1996, p. 215). The *Wolfenden Report* created a public/private dichotomy from which new subgroups of homosexuals were produced: the good/private homosexual and the bad/public homosexual. The report created a safe yet sinful space for consensual acts between adults within the private sphere but criminalized consensual acts between adults if these acts occurred in what the law determined to be public places.

The report also constructed heterosexuality as a "fragile and tenuous identity that is easily displaced by any positive image of homosexuality" (Stychin, 1995, p. 41). *Wolfenden* promoted monogamous, heterosexual family relations, as a way to prevent homosexuality. Distinctions between adult and youth identities were also consolidated by the report. Fears of homosexual recruiting among the young or sexual activity with children were translated into concerns about teachers and other adults who had contact with the young. Specifically, the report warned that homosexuals ought not to have contact with youth. Youth were characterized as easily seduced and therefore readily recruited into 'sin' and 'crime'.

In 1969, Canadian legislators relied on the *Wolfenden Report* to create an omnibus bill entitled the *Criminal Law Amendment Act* which included abortion and prostitution reforms as well as the exemption from the Criminal Code of same-sex sexual activity between two consenting persons performed in private. In supporting this amendment to the Criminal Code, then Justice Minister, Pierre Trudeau made his now famous statement that "the state has no place in the bedrooms of the nation."

While the *Wolfenden Report* loosened state regulation of homosexuality and the Canadian amendment decriminalized homosexuality, the effect of this legal discourse was a 160 percent increase in the conviction rate for homosexual offenses in England and a similar increase in conviction rates in Canada (Kinsman, 1996; Adam, 1995). Increased prosecution of public homosexual acts and the production of the 'good' private homosexual and the 'bad' public homosexual forced sexual minorities into the private realm or 'the closet.' The overriding effect was to silence and stigmatize all those

identified as and identifying as homosexuals.

An example of the struggle over what is to count as public and private and what constitutes criminally or mentally ill activity is the case of Everett George Klippert who was convicted on four counts of gross indecency for having consensual homosexual sex in what was considered to be public space.[1] Based on the emerging psychiatric discourse that produced the notion of the 'sick homosexual', Klippert was designated as a dangerous sexual offender in 1965 (Kinsman, 1996). Klippert's 'crime' was having consensual sex in a car.

This case underscores the ways in which legal distinctions, in this case the distinction between public and private spheres, could be supplanted when the State was confronted with homosexuality. Because heterosexuality was the State sanctioned and privileged site of sexual relations and homosexual sex was to remain hidden, heavier state regulations were imposed on the few places that many practising homosexuals were able to engage in sexual activity. In this case, a car was designated as a public place, even though cars were often sites of sex between consenting heterosexuals and were unpoliced.

The *Wolfenden Report* and the *Criminal Law Amendment Act* further entrenched the notion of "the homosexual" as a group identity. Having a group identity was not necessarily an improvement over being labelled a criminal or sinner as an individual. Individuals still experienced silence, fear, and punishment even if now considered part of a group designated by legal discourse. With group identity came other regulatory interventions including legal mechanisms to force homosexuals into privacy. Establishing a homosexual group identity in legal discourse was, however, beneficial for those who wished to control and regulate the lives of 'sexual deviants'. Moreover, by identifying who was deviant, a notion of 'the heterosexual' was established and solidified as normal by legal discourse.

Discourses of Equality and Freedom of Expression in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*[2]

While Canadian law is based on a British parliamentary system, the adoption of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in 1982 made Canada into a more hybrid legal culture with an American type constitutionally entrenched bill of rights. The *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* has been very significant in designating a particular type of sexual minority

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[1]During the course of an RCMP investigation into a case of arson, Klippert was interviewed and charged after he told police he "had been a homosexual for twenty-four years and admitted to certain sexual acts with males. He was charged with four counts of "gross indecency." All acts were consensual and were not "public" (Kinsman, 1995, p. 258).

[2]Between the Criminal Code amendments of 1969 and Charter rights discourse, a vibrant gay liberation movement facilitated a public face for lesbians and gays in Canada. This paper does not go into the gay liberation movement, but I do wish to acknowledge the invaluable contribution made by those involved. See Miriam Smith (1999) *Lesbian and gay rights in Canada: Social Movements and equality-seeking, 1971-1995* for a detailed analysis of this movement.

identity in Canada. While sexual orientation is not listed as a protected category in the *Charter*, judicial decisions have "read in" sexual orientation. As a consequence of legal decisions based on the *Charter*, lesbian and gay group identity and same-sex couples have been legally recognized. Other sexual minorities such as bisexuals, transsexuals and transgendered people have not benefited in the same way from the *Charter*. As well, sexual minority categories recognized in ethnic and native cultures have not been legally recognized. Native Two-Spirited people, for example, are compromised by having to "choose" between their cultural identity and the labels 'gay' or 'lesbian' in a Canadian legal system that does not countenance Indigenous arguments that these two factors cannot be separated (Wilson, 1996).

Subject to certain limitations, the *Charter* guarantees a series of individual and group rights from encroachment by governments. Of particular importance to the rights of lesbians and gay men are section 2(b) which ensures freedom of expression and section 15(1) which ensures rights of equality before and under the law. Section 15(1) does not include 'sexual orientation' in its list of protected categories, but sexual orientation has recently come to be read in by judges in some cases of discrimination against lesbians or gay men.

As a consequence of legal decisions based on the *Charter*, lesbians and gay men have been recognized as subjects of human rights protection. There have been other consequences as well. Not only are sexual minorities who do not identify as lesbian and gay unrecognized in this legal discourse, heterosexuality has been reentrenched as the norm. 'Sexual orientation' has come to stand in for lesbians and gay men with the implication that only lesbians and gay men have a sexual orientation and that other sexual minorities and heterosexual people do not. Heterosexuality is not named since it is assumed as the real, natural, fully human position. By reading sexual orientation into sections 2(b) and 15(1) of the *Charter*, heterosexuality has been entrenched as the norm and lesbians and gay men have become "special" others who require legal interventions to arrest discriminatory behaviours. Legal discourse based on the *Charter* constructs homosexuality and heterosexuality as dichotomous and essentially different.

While the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* has been interpreted to include lesbians and gay men as a protected category, even with the *Charter*, lesbians and gay men have been denied benefits, culture, and freedom from harassment. While some legal experts argue that Canadian law structures family law and marriage, (Yogis, Duplak, & Trainor, 1996), the cases I cite below demonstrate that Canadian law is structured by the assumption that people are heterosexual. As the following examples show, court interpretations of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* have created a minority sexual orientation status for gays and lesbians in contrast to a heterosexual norm.

The Egan Case

Egan and Nesbit v. Canada (1995) is an example of how the *Charter* has not always worked to protect lesbians and gays because of the way in which heterosexuality functions as the norm in legal discourse. James Egan and John Nesbit had lived together

for more than forty years and, when Egan turned sixty-five in 1986, he applied twice for a spousal allowance for Nesbit under the *Old Age Security Act* (1985). Nesbit was turned down both times because 'spouse' was defined as a person of the opposite sex. Egan and Nesbit appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada and argued that the definition of spouse in the *Old Age Security Act* discriminated against them on the basis of sexual orientation which denied them their equality rights under section 15(1) of the *Charter*.

The majority decision of the Supreme Court ruled "that although there may have been discrimination in violation of section 15(1) of the *Charter*, because the *Old Age Security Act* defined 'spouse' to include only opposite-sex couples, such discrimination could be reasonably justified" (Yogis, Duplak, & Trainor, 1996, pp. 21-23). Justice La Forest, in support of the majority decision, based his comments on the primacy of the "traditional family" in which procreating children is the primary function. He stated that

> marriage is by nature heterosexual. It would be possible to legally define marriage to include homosexual couples, but this would not change the biological and social realities that underlie the traditional marriage. (*Egan and Nesbit v. Canada,* 1995, p. 625)

As MacDougall writes, while the Supreme Court ruling that homosexuals were discriminated against was a turning point in Canadian jurisprudence, it was a grudging admission at best (2000).

Equality rights under the *Charter* could not be reconciled with the definition of spouse that made up acts and laws covering families at that time. Despite the provisions of the *Charter*, lesbians and gay men could not take up a position within Canadian legal discourse in relation to receiving benefits. In the words of Justice Cory, who disagreed with the majority decision, the distinction made between same-sex and opposite-sex couples reinforces "the stereotype that homosexuals cannot and do not form lasting, caring, mutually supportive relationships with economic interdependence in the same manner as heterosexual couples" (*Egan and Nesbit v. Canada*, 1995, p. 677).

While the Supreme Court decided in the Egan that sexual orientation was an analogous ground of discrimination for purposes of Section 15 of the *Charter*, the Supreme Court nevertheless decided that this discrimination was justified, thus denying benefits under the *Old Age Security Act*. This case is an example of how the *Charter* made it possible for lesbians and gay men to assume some legitimacy in Canadian communities while being excluded from provisions of family law which would have entitled them to spousal benefits.

The Case of Little Sisters

Little Sisters Book and Art Emporium in Vancouver is a significant conduit for cultural materials into the gay and lesbian communities in Western Canada. Over the course of many years, Canada Customs has consistently seized or detained publications that Customs officers ruled to be obscene in content. While Little Sisters had often

successfully contested the seizure and detention of materials through the appeal processes provided by the Customs Act, detaining and seizing materials did not stop, causing financial hardship to the store.

In order to remedy this situation, Little Sisters filed suit and charged that "the relevant customs regulations violated freedom of expression under Section 2(b) and equality rights under Section 15 of the *Charter of Rights and* Freedoms. . . . The bookstore also sought a declaration that the customs regulations had been applied in a manner that violated Sections 2(b) and 15 of the *Charter*" (Greer, Barbaree, & Brown, 1997, p. 171). The Supreme Court found that the Customs Act did not violate the *Charter*. Instead, the Court ruled that disadvantage to lesbians and gay men arose from Section 163(8) of the Criminal Code. This case is another example of the contradiction between *Charter* rights and other laws, this time regarding "homosexual" freedom of expression.

The court ruled that "homosexual obscenity is proscribed because it is obscene (under s. 163(8) of the Criminal Code) not because it is homosexual" (Greer, Barbaree, & Brown, 1997, p. 173). Commentators have pointed out, however, that this case reflects an inability to distinguish between homosexuality and pornography (Bull & Gallagher, 1996, p. 163). Others have argued that gay pornography should be treated differently from heterosexual pornography because of its role in securing the political rights of a subject who is forged in marginalized experience (Stychin, 1995, p. 56). Stychin argues that the freedom to create and have access to explicit sexual images is essential to the emergence of gay and lesbian identities in which individuals are able to view homosexuality as a legitimate way in which to live one's life. As Stychin writes:

> [t]he offensiveness of such attempts at discursive control through law is that they deny to some a right of citizenship; that is, a right to articulate a sexual identity within a shared communal space. Finally the material reality of these laws should not be ignored. Individuals have been lost unnecessarily, young people who are confused and miserable have been denied access to information that might instil a positive image, and prejudice and bigotry have been given an official outlet and *promoted* (1995, 54, emphasis in original).

An effect of the ruling in the Little Sisters' case was, once again, to ignore the provisions of the *Charter*, and produce heterosexuality as the norm and homosexuality as the deviant other.

The Case of the Anglican Priest

On June 22, 1993, Daniel Webb was arrested by a police officer who had enticed him into the bushes by offering Mr. Webb sex. Shortly after Mr. Webb's arrest, the local newspaper printed a short piece stating that Mr. Webb had been charged with sexual assault while police worked to "clean up homosexual behaviour" in the park where the

incident occurred. A day after the news item appeared Mr. Webb was asked to resign from his position as Anglican priest in Cambridge, Ontario. On December 7, 1999, Mr. Webb announced that he was "suing the Waterloo Region Police Service for close to $4 million and [was] seeking compensation for the turmoil that the 1993 arrest and media release caused him" (Humphreys, 1999, p. A3).

It is clear from this example that police entrapment of men suspected of trying to have homosexual sex in public places contradicts 2(b) of the *Charter* which ensures freedom of expression, and section15(1) of the *Charter* which ensures equality before and under the law. In the case of Mr. Webb, while sexual touching occurred between two consenting adults, no sex took place in this "public" place. This case underlines that, despite the *Charter*, homosexual consensual contact is not treated in the same way under the law as heterosexual sexual consensual contact. People looking for heterosexual sex is a common, public activity that, except in the case of prostitution, interests neither the police nor the courts, nor do people lose their livelihoods for engaging in this kind of behavior. The *Charter* did not protect Mr. Webb from the provisions of the Criminal Code that seeks to penalize public displays of homosexuality.

The *Criminal Law Amendment Act*, the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and Bill C23 each has as their basis an assumption of heterosexuality as the norm. Opening up legal discourse for inclusion of at least some sexual minorities has not diminished the force of heteronormativity in legal discourse. The *Criminal Law Amendment Act* privatized homosexual affection and sex while heterosexual affection and some sexual activity retained its status as public sex. Court interpretations of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* establishes sexual orientation as something that lesbians and gay men have while heterosexuals retain their status as the unnamed norm. Bill C23 has made it possible for same-sex couples to take up many of the benefits previously only afforded heterosexual couples but it protects marriage for those who are 'normal'. Moreover, Bill C23 also normalizes and domesticates same-sex relations to the extent to which they mirror heterosexual partnerships. Those who identify with other sexual arrangements remain outside of legal discourse.

Canadian Legal Discourse and Education

Protecting minority groups from discrimination is now an important part of Canadian legal discourse. While offering protections in law, Canadian legal jurisprudence is productive in consolidating sexual identities and producing conditions of possibility that reach beyond the protective intentions of the *Charter*. Sexual identities like heterosexuality and homosexuality, are forged in opposition to one another and produce as an effect the consolidation of homophobic and heterosexist practices. Educational institutions and the discourses emanating from them, like legal discourse, serve to constitute what is normal and therefore, what is outside the normal. The production of normal sexual identity in educational settings has the effect of producing discrimination and harassment of sexual minority students.

> The most important factor in the perpetuation of homophobia and marginalisation of homosexuals, including self-hatred in homosexuals, is the intense indoctrination in heterosexism that children experience, a great deal of it in educational institutions. Society loses much of its rationality when it comes to homosexuality and children. Children are 'sheltered' from contact with homosexuality and homosexuals, who are presumed to prey on them. (MacDougall, 2000, p. 96)

Not only are sexual minority youth outsiders to discourses about what constitutes a normal youth, they are often outsiders to what counts as a sexual minority. Homosexuality is posited in dominant discourses as an adult phenomenon thus making it possible for adult sexual minorities to be cast as predators of youth and youth, including sexual minority youth, as innocent victims of contact with sexual minority adults. Dangers of allowing homosexuals access to children and youth permeated judicio-legal discourse surrounding the 1969 *Criminal Act Amendment*. In the 1950s and 1960s there was a series of moral panics related to children, youth and homosexuality across Canada (Kinsman, 1996, pp. 313, 336, 338, 341; Adams, 1997). Far from preventing children from being affected by homosexuality, proliferation of legal and civic discourse about homosexuality and children ensured that children and youth were profoundly affected by fears of homosexuality. At the heart of these public discourses about homosexuality, masquerading as age of consent issues for example, is the notion that children are either asexual because of their age or the assumption is that children/youth are heterosexual. Children/youth could not possibly be homosexual, according to these discourses. I turn now to legal cases in which "the homosexual" in education had to be eradicated in order to protect innocent youth in educational institutions.

Strange Judgments I: The Case of Douglas Wilson, 1976

In 1976, Douglas Wilson complained to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission that, through his employer, the University of Saskatchewan, he had suffered employment discrimination because of his sex and in particular because he was homosexual[3]. Wilson's complaint arose from his dismissal from the supervision of practicum student teachers in the College of Education. His dismissal came about when it was brought to the attention of the Dean of Education that Wilson had advertised in the local student newspaper for interested parties to join an "academic gay association." While the exact focus of Wilson's proposed group is not clear, it was not about having public homo-sex on campus. His call was similar to many others of the late 1960s and 1970s in which large numbers of student groups organized on campuses.

An early effect of the Wilson dismissal was on gay communities on campus and in Saskatoon generally. Wilson's call for a group on campus did not materialize in any visible way. Gays on campus remained invisible for fear of dismissal or other punitive

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[3]Wilson's case, as presented here, is drawn from Herman, 1994; Yogis, Duplak, and Trainor, 1996; Kinsman, 1996; and MacDougall, 2000.

measures. As well, many gays on and off campus were angry with Wilson for 'causing' a problem where none had existed. The message was clear: whereas other social justice issues were enjoying public attention on university campuses, gay and lesbian issues were to remain closeted and outside of the norm of public spaces. The spectacle of the public and therefore the "bad gay" of politico-legal discourse was reinforced in and through the Douglas Wilson case by both the gay and the dominant community.

Wilson argued that his sexual orientation was an immutable sex characteristic, not chosen and, therefore, not a legitimate basis for discrimination. The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, before proceeding with the application, ruled that 'sex' in their code, included 'sexual orientation.' The University of Saskatchewan applied for a judicial review of the commission's ruling. The higher court found that the category sex had nothing to do with sexual proclivity, that is sexual orientation (Herman, 1994, p. 21). The substance of the case was never reviewed because the higher court ruling disallowed the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission the right to investigate complaints related to sexual orientation on the grounds that no category, especially the category of 'sex' in the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, covered complaints of discrimination related to homosexuality. Further, in a move that reaffirmed long-standing discrimination against homosexual employment rights, the high court "stated that if the legislature had intended to cover homosexuality in the legislation, it would have said so clearly and unmistakably" (Yogis, Duplak, & Trainor, 1996, p. 3).

Many things may be said about the case of Doug Wilson. His work as a teacher in Saskatchewan schools prior to his graduate work had been exemplary. His work as a supervisor of practicum teachers had been exemplary. The call for colleagues to join an "academic association" was a call for an association to engage intellectually with other academics, like himself, at a time when student organizing around social justice issue was particularly strong. It was not a call to have sex on campus or in public. Yet, publicly using the word gay or homosexual, was (and still is) taken as a sign for sexual activity. However, few, if any, of his mentors and professors at the University were aware of his sexual identity until someone brought Wilson's ad to the attention of the Dean. Wilson's low profile was the exact opposite to that of the Dean of Education, for example, a known married man often seen socializing on and off campus with his straight wife in attendance. In fact, it was known by all on campus that the Dean was married. Wilson's orientation or primary relationship, in contrast, was never on display. For the sexual minority of 1976, the same privileges that heterosexuals took for granted, could lose one the privacy and security of the closet.

Most students, then and now, take for granted the right to post notices, especially in student newspapers, advertising to form new groups and tackle a range of issues. The 1960's saw widespread campus agitation regarding student rights which had produced changes to student involvement and rights in the 1970s. Yet, in the Wilson case, violation of students' rights was submerged by the larger homophobic impulse.

What Douglas Wilson's case makes clear is that anxieties abound around the myth of homosexual predation and recruitment when in proximity to youth–in this case, to aspiring and young teachers and to the children and youth they teach. The myth of the

vulnerability of young pre-service teachers, children and youth to homosexual risk was concretized through Wilson in a highly public way with at least five immediate effects.

The first effect was that children and youth were portrayed as weak-willed, sexually innocent, sexually vulnerable and therefore substantively different from adults. Children and youth were considered to be so completely vulnerable that having a homosexual in close proximity to them, even if the homosexual's identity was not known to the children and youth, placed these youngsters at great risk of harm. The second effect is the production of adults as a distinct category in relation to those under the age of eighteen. Those who are close in age to eighteen, the student-teachers Wilson was supervising, were cast as vulnerable and recruitable. Meanwhile, some adults were represented as both weak-willed yet powerful homosexual predators while most adults, like the Dean of Education, were represented as strong-willed, invincible older folks who protect the young from the homosexual menace.

The third effect was to reproduce Douglas Wilson, formerly exemplary teacher and supervisor of pre-service teachers, as a hyper-sexualized adult and sexual predator, whose work history and academic record were incidental. Wilson was produced as immoral and therefore, not worthy of a job with young teachers. Wilson was fired. His exemplary work record was wiped out because of his offence of "homosexuality." He was further humiliated when a higher court ruled that the law was not "intended to cover homosexuality" and that, if it was intended, the law would have said so clearly and unmistakably. Wilson did not teach again and he did not finish his graduate studies.

The negative publicity directed toward sexual minorities throughout this ordeal resulted in Wilson being the target of the gay and lesbian community's anger. But more pervasively the fourth effect was the continued silencing and marginalization of sexual minorities. The fifth effect was that children and youth were to be understood, by definition, as heterosexual. By definition, a homosexual youth could not be recruited. Any notion that a child or youth could be homosexual was not possible within the constraints of the legal and social discourse of this case. This has a continuing impact on the status of sexual minority children and youth in schools, not the least of which because these children and youth *do exist*.

Wilson's case is important for some other effects as well. Through the high court ruling, the confusion around categories of sex and sexual orientation were exposed. In part, this confusion relates to the inability of heteronormative discourse to countenance that persons categorized male or female may have a sexual practice that is not heterosexual. Indeed, to be male or female within heteronormative discourse is to be heterosexual. In order to be able to hear what they clearly thought was a case of employment discrimination, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission argued to include sexual orientation under 'sex', thereby exposing the limitations of these categories within heteronormative discourse. This attempt by the Human Rights Commission toward inclusion while using categories that could not accommodate inclusion, anticipated more contemporary deconstructive understandings of sex and gender discourse in which the homosexual exceeds the limits of these categories and exposes the falseness of an assumed coherence of sex, gender, and sexual desire, and sexual practice.

Strange Judgments II: Delwin Vriend, 1991

Delwin Vriend was a laboratory coordinator at Kings College, a Christian post-secondary educational institution, in Edmonton, Alberta. When his college president asked Vriend if he was homosexual, Vriend said yes. Though a competent employee, Vriend was fired in 1991 for noncompliance with the policy of the College regarding homosexual practice. Vriend laid a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission under the auspices of the Individual Rights and Protection Act (*IRPA*). Vriend's complaint was that being fired for being homosexual was contrary to the *IRPA*. Recalling the same reasoning of the judicial review of Wilson's 1976 case, the Commission disagreed, stating that homosexuality was not a protected ground under the *IRPA* and therefore ruled that it had no jurisdiction to investigate such complaints.

Next, Vriend applied to the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench with a complaint that provisions in the IRPA were contrary to the *Canadian Charter of Rights* (*Charter*), in particular the equality provision of s.15. Madam Justice Russell of the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench ruled in favour of Vriend thus allowing him to file complaint against his former employer with the Commission. The province of Alberta appealed Justice Russell's decision through the Alberta Court of Appeal. Mr. Justice McClung, in the lead decision, reversed the decision of Justice Russell. Justice McClung found that "the Alberta legislation is not discriminatory on its face nor in its effect as it treats homosexuals and heterosexuals alike, nor does its silence count as government action" (O'Byrne & McGinnis, 1996, p. 895). McClung noted, as well, that the Alberta legislature had not wanted to include protection of sexual orientation and, in fact, had gone to great length to ensure that this protection did not happen. At least six bills to address protection of sexual orientation had been introduced between 1986 and 1992 by opposition members. Mr. Justice O'Leary concurred with McClung while Madam Justice Hunt dissented.

Counsel for Vriend petitioned the Supreme Court of Canada to appeal the Alberta Court of Appeal decision and this appeal was accepted for hearing. The decision of the high Court found in favour of Vriend. In an exceptional move the Supreme Court of Canada altered the Alberta human rights code by reading in sexual orientation as a protected category, thus disallowing the provincial government an opportunity to continue opposition to equality rights enshrined in the *Charter* by dragging out revisions to Alberta's human rights legislation. Given the resistance of the Alberta provincial government to include sexual orientation this was a rational strategy in order to effectively bring provincial legislation into line with the *Charter*.

One of the immediate effects of the Supreme Court decision was what I have termed a *moral panic*. Symptoms of this moral panic included a frenzy of radio and television talk show discussions, copious newspaper reporting, pages of letters to the editors, calls for invocation of the notwithstanding clause so that the province could opt out of the Supreme court decision, a cacophony of phone calls to members of the legislative assembly registering individual views on whether to use the "notwithstanding clause", petitions, hate letters to a high profile gay city counsellor, and increased hate calls to local lesbian and gay community centres. The panic was fuelled by politicians,

fundamentalist religious leaders, reporters, talk show hosts and a range of others. Following initial euphoria and hope for a different Alberta, an immediate effect on the gay and lesbian communities of Alberta was fear, demoralization and anxiety as Albertans waited to hear the pronouncement from the Klein government as to whether it would invoke the "notwithstanding clause".

The case of Vriend is remarkable for exposing the arbitrariness of categories like public/private sex. As in the Wilson case, an issue of employment, was hijacked to become an issue of immorality. Fear that Vriend's homosexuality, even though he was not out in the classroom, might interfere with his teaching and influence students was so strong that religious leaders at Kings College sought a solution by firing Vriend. The religious leaders at Kings College represented their outing of Vriend into something he had done wrong. They transmogrified their fears about homosexuality into an issue of morality rather than an issue of equality in employment practices. They created a crisis of public space where none had existed. The authorities at Kings College made Vriend's homosexuality a work issue.

The contradictions between Canadian Charter law and provincial human rights legislation crack wide open when heteronormative moralizing and religious freedom are pitted against individual and group protections. What also becomes apparent is the confusion about an identity, imagined sexual activities, and actual sexual practice. Admitting to a homosexual identity does not mean that one is sexually active. Vriend was not sexually active during his employment hours at Kings College (O'Byrne & McGinnis, 1996). His dismissal arose from imagined activities outside his employment hours (O'Bryne & McGinnis, 1996). As MacDougall writes, the imaginings of his superiors were what could not be countenanced, not Vriend's actual actions about which little or nothing is known (2000, p. 107). Justice McClung made the same mistake when he used the word 'sodomy' in his decision in the Alberta Court appeal. Vriend was not dismissed because of sodomy (O'Byrne & McGinnis, 1996). We do not know if Vriend practiced sodomy. Sodomy was brought into the conversation by the pronouncements of Justice McClung in his lead decision. Sexual minorities, in this case, gay men are not allowed to conduct employment duties because of the imaginings of those around them.

The consequences of the heteronormative, homophobic and religious fundamentalist discources associated with the Vriend case are far reaching, including reproducing representations of youth and children as sexually innocent, heterosexual, and easily recruited or victimized by homosexuals. Even though Vriend won at the Supreme Court, the fervour with which his case was taken up in the province reinscribed old fears: fears about the effects of homosexuality on youth and children, fears about the transmission of HIV/AIDS, and fears about the 'origins' of homosexuality. As with Wilson and the Surrey School Board case which follow, Vriend is one of the rare cases in which the confluence of homosexuality and education were directly taken up through the courts. Vriend is particularly important because of the high level of court activity achieved in this case through Supreme Court acceptance to hear Vriend and in the ruling in favour of Vriend.

Strange Judgements III: Surrey School Board, BC, Multiple Actions, 1998

In the spring of 1997, the Surrey School Board voted 4-2 against approval of the use of three books in kindergarten and grade one because the books featured same-sex parents.[4] Board chair, Robert Pickering, saw the books as both promotion of a lifestyle and recruitment devices. It is worthwhile noting that Pickering was a director of the Citizens' Research Institute, a right-wing christian organization promoting and recruiting potential followers of family values discourse. Several years earlier, the Surrey School Board was taken over by a group of citizens linked to Pickering and the Citizen's Research Institute. In another and further action, the school board supported a principal's decision to remove a child from the classroom of a gay teacher, James Chamberlain. At the same time, the Citizens' Research Institute conducted a "family rights campaign" in which parents were asked to sign a declaration stating that their children were not allowed to be involved in any school program that portrayed the "lifestyles of gays, lesbians, and/or transgendered individuals as one which is normal, acceptable or must be tolerated" (GALE/FORCE, March 1999, p. 2). In keeping with these other actions, the Board further voted overwhelmingly to poll Surrey parents on "the gay issue."

Education Minister Paul Ramsey called the board's actions intolerant and noted Pickering's anti-gay activities and affiliations. Gay teacher, James Chamberlain filed a grievance. Gay rights advocates took the Surrey Board book banning to the British Columbia Supreme Court. Meanwhile, Surrey trustees planned to spend whatever it would take (over $500,000) to keep the three books out of their school system. In December 1998, B.C. Supreme Court Justice Mary Saunders ruled that the Board's actions were influenced by the trustees' religious views and further, that these contravened the B.C. School Act. An independent arbitrator, Stephen Kelleher, ruled in September 1999 that the Board discriminated against Chamberlain when it supported the principal's decision to remove a student from Chamberlain's class. Meanwhile, new Board Chair Heather Stillwell said the board did the right thing by supporting the principal in removal of the student from Chamberlain's class. Board vice-chair Gary Tymoschuk stated that the Board would think up new ways to ban the three books, that Kelleher's ruling was "ludicrous," and that the board would continue to remove children from classrooms if it was in the child's best interest (GALE/FORCE, November 1999, p. 4).

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[4]In September, 2000, the B.C. Supreme Court overturned a B.C. Court of Appeal ruling that struck down the Surrey school board's decision to ban three books about children living with gay or lesbian parents. The appeal court said the December 1998 decision was flawed because it wrongly determined the board had been influenced by the religious beliefs of some trustees when it decided the three books (*Asha's Mums; One Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dads, Blue Dads; Belinda's Bouquet)* would not be approved as learning resources. But Justice Kenneth MacKenzie who wrote the Appeal Court decision, also said the three books met the board's criteria for school library use and could therefore be taken by teachers into kindergarten and Grade 1 classes for story time and discussion. Both sides claimed victory and the Board intends to ask the court to award it costs. After three years and almost $1 million in legal costs for two prolonged court battles, costs are high.

When the B.C. Teachers' Federation heard about Tymoschuk's comments it paid, along with the Surrey Teachers' Association, to have Kelleher's ruling registered in B.C. Supreme Court so that if the Surrey School Board broke the ruling, it would be in contempt of court and face fines and jail time. Countering this action, the Surrey School Board forced the Surrey Teacher's Association's lawyer to appear before the B.C. Supreme Court, arguing against filing of Kelleher's ruling with B.C. Supreme Court. This was dropped when Surrey School Board Chairperson Heather Stillwell and vice-Chair Gary Tymoschuk both filed affidavits with the court stating they would abide by Kelleher's ruling.

Clearly the years after Douglas Wilson's dismissal in 1976 have witnessed a number of changes as these relate to sexual minorities in education. In 1976, Wilson's fate as an outed homosexual working with young and aspiring teachers was predetermined. There simply could not have been any other decision based on the public/private split enshrined in the 1969 *Criminal Act* amendments and the statements regarding teachers and children arising out of *Wolfenden* and the Canadian derivatives of *Wolfenden*. What the Surrey School Board points to, in particular, is just how uneven these changes have been. It is worth noting that both Surrey and Wilson took place within the context of publicly funded institutions while Vriend's case occurred at a "private" religious college. Vriend is most clearly about religious intolerance. And yet, in the case of Surrey, religious values came into play as well. In both public institutional settings, public values of inclusion collide with religiously inspired fears about homosexuality and children.

The Surrey School Board case again reveals the contradictions between the Canadian Charter and a religious discourse. While School Boards are to represent the mandates of public school education, including inclusivity, religious and other private schools have no such requirements. This leaves human rights issues affecting sexual minorities vulnerable to contestation by anti-gay religious actions not only as these affect private schools but when those with religious beliefs about homosexuality assume control of public School Boards. According to provincial and federal law, religious beliefs are to be kept separate from public education and schooling. It is clear from Justice Mary Saunders' decision that she found the religious attitudes of the board members did interfere with the public school mandate of inclusion and therefore did contravene the B.C. School Act.

As with the Wilson and Vriend cases, this case exposes, that even in the late 1990s, a moral panic can be fuelled by the confluence of children and youth exposed to either a gay teacher or reading materials with positive gay content. A frenzy of energy was put into preventing recruitment or contamination, including petitions, meetings, and conferences in which Kari Simpson, anti-gay crusader was a keynote across the province. Over $500,000 was expended by the Surrey School Board to prevent inclusion of three gay-positive books. The cost as this case is heard by various levels of the judiciary with all the attendant resources in use has implicated tax payers beyond Surrey. Although this should not happen in publicly funded education, the religious beliefs of a relatively small group of adults has been imposed on the majority of others, including children, parents, teachers and the surrounding community. What is revealed is just how vulnerable public

education is to moral panic about sexual minorities. This vulnerability occurs even as *in*clusion of all is the mandate of school acts across Canada and the foundation of Canadian charter values.

Emerging: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back?

What is significantly different about the Surrey case from Wilson is that the challenges to gay rights have been unsuccessful. James Chamberlain is visible and significantly, visibly supported. Various levels of educational professional associations provided much needed support as did the queer community. More critical, important human rights legislation relating to gays and lesbians was in place in B.C. Legislators and the judiciary were prepared to back gay human rights and inclusive education. Book-banning brought out public fears in B.C. around censorship so that concern was widespread, going beyond those who have children in schools.

Yet, this has been a costly battle in time and dollars, with fund raising and pro bono legal and other work on the pro-gay side and tax payers dollars in excess of $500,000 to defend the Surrey School Board. For several years the Surrey School Board was able to spread its message and act on this within a school district and province that was openly bringing about educational change supporting gay rights and content as part of its larger framework. For example, the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) had passed recommendations at its 1997 annual general meeting that a committee to study homophobia/heterosexism and social justice issues be struck. In many ways the Surrey School Board actions were in reaction to these broader inclusive educational changes as well as the BCTF recommendations. What the struggle in Surrey reveals is the deep-seated response on the part of some Canadians to the inclusion of sexual minorities as fully Canadian citizens. Not only does the Surrey School Board case signal a solidification of right-wing Christian values, it demonstrates that, unlike in the Wilson case, sexual minority people are willing to resist and to be visible in this resistance. An effect of this visibility in mounting legal challenges is the solidification of group identity.

One of the issues exemplified by all three cases is that, for some people, any hint of homosexuality in schools constitutes recruitment and endorsement of a 'lifestyle'. Breaking the silence about sexuality constitutes an assault on the traditional family. To be exposed to homosexuality is to recruit their children into a life of pathology and sin. For these people, the threat of homosexuality is equal to stealing their children away from them. And yet, historically, marginalized groups of people are those who have their children taken from them: physically, spiritually, or emotionally. Gays and lesbians either have their children taken from them or leave children behind because of the threat of custody disputes. First Nations peoples in Canada have had their children taken and placed in residential schools. Jewish people had their children taken, through death, during the Holocaust. Black people in the United States had their children sold into slavery elsewhere. Poor people everywhere lose their children to state social welfare systems. It is marginalized groups of people who have their children stolen from them, historically and in contemporary times.

The Surrey School Board actions presume that one 'becomes' a sexual minority by being introduced through reading to other ways of interacting in the world. The fear about where sexual minorities come from misses seeing that they are most often produced in "normal" heterosexual families. Sexual minority offspring seem to be the effect of heteronormative family and community structures.

Wrapping up Strange Judgements

Douglas Wilson is dead and never practiced as a teacher after 1976. Delwin Vriend was given leave to complain to the Alberta Human Rights Commission but with the time lag between the actual event and the high court decision, Vriend had moved on in life. It remains for another case to test homosexual rights in the province of Alberta. Both Wilson and Vriend paid high costs emotionally and financially, costs that we can only begin to imagine. Vriend had the good fortune of wide-spread community support from queer and straight peoples and organizations. Wilson was vilified by most and only recently is remembered in a more positive way through a series of conferences at the University of Saskatchewan called "Breaking the Silence." We have come a long way from the year 1976 and the case of Douglas Wilson. While new disputes are ongoing[5], the Surrey School Board actions have been checked by *Charter* law either directly or indirectly.

Each of these high-profile cases is about white, middle-class, gay, male adults. The spector of the predatory homosexual as a white, gay, adult man is reconfirmed and it solidifies the notion that gay rights is about white, adult, male gay rights. What is also a concern is that each of these cases has had the effect of erasing the sexual minority child or youth. The production of children and youth as either heterosexual or asexual is assumed. The very existence and therefore the rights of sexual minority youth and children is not countenanced. As the following accounts reveal, that they exist is simply not true.

Sexual Minority Youth: Three Proposed Cases for Charter Challenges

The following are accounts drawn from interviews with sexual minority youth in Alberta schools. Significantly, none of these cases have become *Charter* cases. The contradictions between discourses of homosexuality and the construction of youth through these discourses are exposed when confronted with the reality of queer youth. Since Canadian law continues to construct sexual minority status outside the norm and effectively mandates heterosexuality as the centre from which all other sexual practices deviate, schools, as with most other places within Canadian cultural context, are unable to deal with sexual minority youth except to "socially de-range" them (Corrigan, 1987). Discourses of youth that construct all youth as heterosexual de-range queer youth in

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[5]James Chamberlain has been reprimanded for making remarks about a youth who committed suicide. Chamberlain claims he did not make such remarks and he is filing a complaint against the Surrey School Board.

equally confounding and harmful ways.

Charter Non-Case I: Ellen[6]

Ellen was an outstanding student. She was a high-achiever in both sports and academics. She was in the top five percentile of her school district and she was active as a student on the school Council, the yearbook committee, and other extracurricular activities. She was the kind of model student that parents long for and teachers and principals desire all students in their schools to be. Her teachers knew her well and found her a pleasure to have in class as she was rarely disruptive, asked great questions, and finished her homework on time and in an exemplary fashion. Teachers told Ellen that she was a wonderful student, "a pleasure to have in the classroom." As well, Ellen was popular with her schoolmates, both female and male. She was cooperative, confident, and fun to be around. Ellen had always loved school and found school a safe haven from her home life, spending long hours there from the time she was in elementary school.

Ellen knew about her sexual identity since her late junior high school years. It was increasingly important for Ellen to be "true to herself" and to be an out "baby-dyke lesbian." In grade eleven, so there was no confusion, Ellen deliberately wore clothing that she thought announced her orientation. This clothing consisted of jeans, work boots, and a leather jacket. Ellen's hair was short and spiky. She did not want anyone to mistake her for someone she was not.

In grade eleven she was best friends with another young woman, Anne, who was also the girlfriend of the captain of the school football team. Anne had difficulties in her relationship with the football captain. She thought he took her for granted. In an effort to shake his assumptions, Anne flirted openly with Ellen in front of the football team and Ellen flirted back. The football captain became increasingly angry and finally threatened Ellen.

One Friday while Ellen was walking down the school hall during a scheduled class time for most other students, she saw the football captain coming down the hall from the other direction. Ellen felt unsure and unsafe and decided that the best course of action was to keep her head down and not make eye contact. As they drew closer together, out of the corner of her eye she saw the football captain veering sharply toward her. Wham! Ellen was slammed into a set of lockers with a body check that knocked the breath out of her. Some of those who witnessed the assault came forward to assist her. Ellen was taken to a hospital emergency where she was treated for two broken ribs and severe bruising.

Ellen complained to school counsellors and the principal on the following Monday. All of these people knew her well because of her high profile as an outstanding student in the high school. The principal told her that there was not much he could do because a major inter-school football competition was under way over the next few days and the school could not be without one of its star players. He suspended the football captain for two days but only after the competition was over and in response to pressure from one

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[6]Named for Ellen Degeneres, actor and comedian.

teacher and Ellen.

Both the principal and the counsellors expressed concern that Ellen not be so visible. They asked her why she flirted with Anne anyway. They agreed that the assault was not the best way to handle things but felt the football captain was threatened by Ellen's sexuality. They indicated that they thought it to be okay for Ellen to be gay but that she crossed the line by flirting with heterosexual girls. Ellen was shaken by their accusations. Her once safe haven, school, was no longer safe. If school authorities felt she was "asking for it" because she was "too out" how could she feel safe in school again, given what had happened. Ellen felt shamed and publicly humiliated because very little, in her estimation, had happened to the football captain. Ellen felt like her life had altered completely.

According to the law, Ellen had been physically assaulted. At the time of the assault, the perpetrator or football captain, was over 16 years of age and could have been charged. Yet school authorities failed to recognize this or refused to take action because of Ellen's sexual identity. School professionals failed to provide the kind of learning environment for Ellen, a safe and caring environment that is promised under Alberta Education's vision. Further, her high school, which operates under provincial imperatives about inclusivity had failed in its mandate to be inclusive in fair and equal treatment for Ellen. Rather than see the assault on Ellen as an issue of freedom of expression, the right to equal treatment, the right to safety and inclusion in all ways, school professionals chose to take a moralizing approach whereby Ellen becomes the perpetrator and the football captain became the victim.

Ellen 's outsider status was guaranteed through heterornormative discourse, including legal discourse of protections that produces all sexual minorities as outside the norm of heterosexuality, a norm that functions equally harshly in schools as in the larger Canadian context. Ellen was seen as flaunting her sexual orientation and deserving of punishment to put her back in her place. Flirting back in response to Anne's flirtation was misconstrued as a deliberate attempt to seduce a regular heterosexual girl into Ellen's "lifestyle" and away from a normal relationship with a high-profile heterosexual male. Anne's flirtation with Ellen, a girl, was of little importance because Anne is 'normal' and therefore her actions were in fun. Ellen's actions, because she is deviant, cannot be taken as fun. The football captain, was, therefore, justified in his anger because Ellen had no right to violate heterosexual norms. On this thinking, Ellen had humiliated the football captain and called into question his masculinity and his heterosexual prowess because his girlfriend Anne was flirting, publicly, with Ellen and not him.

Ellen's transgressive actions were violations of school and cultural norms and therefore, became punishable actions. The football captain disciplined Ellen for these violations. Ellen was put back into her place, the place of all sexual minorities who dare to act as if they have the right to inclusion, freedom of expression and equal rights before the law. Disciplining Ellen in the norms of school is a sharp reminder that tolerance is thin at best and you better know your own place or retribution will be swift.

This case represents "school as usual." Social control and disciplining, active indifference or unwillingness to counter what is a homophobic assault work to smooth the

continued functioning of heteronormativity. The casualty of one sexual minority student is incidental, even if this student is an exemplary student. Yet, according to the Canadian *Charter*, Ellen's fundamental right to freedom of expression and association are guaranteed and protected. Ellen has a right to express herself as an "out baby-dyke lesbian" in a public institution without fear of punishment. Like the football captain and Anne, Ellen has the right to flirt with whomever she cares. Ellen has the right to equality of treatment before the law and before school authorities. But, in one minor interruption of the seamlessness of heteronormativity, the football captain and school authorities *both* violated Ellen's rights and got away with it.

Prior to the assault, Ellen thought she would be protected from physical assaults, especially those which occurred on school grounds. She believed that those responsible for such actions against her would be punished accordingly. Ellen thought, as a Canadian, she enjoyed the rights and protections offered by her status as a citizen in this country. The School Act in her province as well as Canadian Charter law guarantee all of these for her.

Ellen thought she lived in a different world, that is a different time, from that of, say, Douglas Wilson or Delwin Vriend. Not that Ellen knew about Douglas Wilson but she certainly knew about Vriend and had expectations that her life in school would be different because of his high-profile struggle and her discussions of this struggle with teachers and counsellors over a two-year period. Teachers and counsellors had made her believe, falsely as it was now clear, that the educational professionals in her school were different, and that times were different. In the aftermath of the assault on her, Ellen's sense of violation and alienation combined with her strong sense of her lack of safety was such that she completed the few remaining weeks of school and decided to do her final year of school by correspondence. Ellen, 'out' student, was effectively disappeared from school.

Charter Non-Case II: Michel[7]

Michel was not an exemplary student. He did okay at school but school was not a priority in his life. He hated sports and would not dream of being involved on school committees and student counsel. Primarily, school was a social occasion for Michel to gossip and a social space to wear fashionable clothes and see what everyone else was wearing. Michel planned to be a lawyer but in the meantime he wanted to take full advantage of his youth.

Like many other youth, Michel had some close friends in his high school but was especially close to a young straight woman, Barbie. The only person Michel was out to at school was Barbie. Michel's other main source of social support was from the local queer youth group which had a drop-in night as well as an information night, both of which Michel attended regularly. Through this youth group, Michel was invited to talk on a local radio show about his experiences as a sexual minority youth. He was assured his voice would be disguised so that he could not be identified. Michel saw himself as a

[7]Named for Michel Foucault.

closeted community activist so anonymity was highly important to him.

The day after the radio show aired was a school day. Michel was not expecting anything unusual and at first nothing out of the ordinary occurred. His first class of the afternoon was Career and Life Management (CALM) class. Michel went in and seated himself in his usual place, waiting with the rest of the class for the teacher. As he read over some work from another class, bits of balled of paper started landing on him, his desk, and the floor around him. Michel looked up and around and bits of paper continued to be peppered at him as those throwing the paper bits started chanting "fag-got, fag-got, fag-got." Not everyone in the class was engaged in these actions but neither did they do anything to stop what was happening. Michel described the time prior to the teacher walking in as seemingly endless. After the teacher arrived, the volley of paper bits and chanting continued but on a quieter note. At this point, Michel who was already frustrated and frightened, slammed his books together and started to storm out of class. The teacher, appearing oblivious to what had happened, stopped Michel with a hand and asked where he was going. Michel threw her hand off, shoved the teacher out of the way, and shouted that he had had enough of this "shit." He stormed out of the class and left the school.

The teacher filed a complaint with the vice-principal against Michel for his "violent" behaviour. Michel went to a school counsellor and complained about the actions and inactions of the students and teacher in his CALM class. He was furious that he had been identified with the radio talk show as this was the only connection he could see to the harassment. Michel was "outed" without his permission. He was also angry that the teacher was indifferent to what he thought were obvious actions against him. Michel was quite certain the teacher heard the word "fag-got" being chanted at him and chose to ignore this.

The counsellor, vice-principal, and teacher involved the principal. In a meeting between them and Michel, it became clear that the school authorities were incapable of or unwilling to handle what had taken place. Michel knew that his school district had recently passed a public "safety action plan for lesbian, gay and transgender youth" and that there was someone working for the school board who could assist him. Michel knew this through his youth group and not through any information provided by the school. He contacted the board person, Eve S., and asked her if she would intercede on his behalf. A meeting between Eve S., the school counsellors, the CALM teacher, principal, vice-principal, a social worker, and Michel took place. Once again, it became clear that the school had difficulty coming up with any clear action to address what had happened. Suggestions made by Eve S. were rejected as not practical enough or as too controversial. The fear on the part of the principal, teachers, and counsellors was that parents would become upset or even enraged at having gay rights "shoved down their throats." The principal asked why Michel talked on the radio show, thus exposing himself as a "homosexual." The principal suggested further, that Michel should have known better than to talk so openly. In the principal's view, Michael was deliberating holding out a red flag and antagonizing those who do not like homosexuals.

Between the actual event, the first meetings with school professionals and the final meeting with school board involvement, a period of over two months had transpired.

Michel had been encouraged by all school professionals to continue attending school during this time but when he did go to school harassment in and out of classes had accelerated. Name-calling, bumping into him, and deliberate physical avoidance by some who gasped and inched along the walls when they saw Michel were just some of the actions engaged in by a small group of students intent on making Michel's sexuality an issue. Michel named these students but none were disciplined as it was his word against theirs and other witnesses, even amongst his friends, did not materialize on his behalf. Michel felt his safety was completely compromised and he dropped out of school. He volunteered at his local HIV/AIDS network and took a course by correspondence instead. The following year, Michel attended a different high school far away across the city.

As with Ellen, discourses of homosexuality as adult and discourses of youth as innocent and/or heterosexual produced Michel as both deviant and impossible for schools and professionals to deal with. He is a category violator by virtue of being a youth who is queer. According to these discourses, Michel should not exist. Yet, according to Alberta Education, Michel, like *all other students* in Alberta, is promised "excellence" in his education. It is difficult to see how this promise materialized for Michel. His learning environment became unsafe through the "outing" actions of someone else and his only option, dropping out, became the only safe option for him to pursue in order to escape an increasingly hostile and harassing environment. Further, the *Alberta School Act* promises inclusion and yet, by lack of action on the part of school professionals and punitive action on the part of some of his schoolmates, Michel was excluded from the schooling and benefits offered to most other students. Further, under section 15(1) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights*, the equality rights provision, which guarantees equality before and under the law, Michel was treated in a manner which most compromised his right to equal treatment, inclusion and accommodation in his school, and therefore violated his fundamental Charter rights. In direct opposition to Charter guarantees in fact, he was instead treated like a social inferior.

Michel's identity and experience have been socially deranged (Corrigan, 1987, p. 21) in such a way that his experience of harassment could not be addressed by school authorities. As Corrigan writes:

> It is not, I insist, the *self*-concept that is damaged, but the *social* identity which is deranged. More specifically in validating a particular value and its ways civilization in short – people who *cannot* come to that value with an experience which connects, find themselves *not there*, or and these are twin practices – find themselves there only as negative examples: *their* family form, *their* sense of *their* value and ways is acknowledged (i.e., found in a discourse valuated as knowledge) only to be named (thus claimed) as partial, traditional, faulty, on the way to . . . (1987, p. 21)

Michel's experiences of homophobia, like Ellen's, were turned into occasions where his judgement was questioned and rendered as a lack of judgment. Michel's valuing of his difference, his very right to be different, both of which he revealed on the radio

show were rendered questionable. Talking about his negative school experiences was recast as waving a red flag for those who found him objectionable. Being sexually different was turned into a moral issue, too controversial for normal students, their parents, and the immediate community. This was possible because Michel's social experiences were outside the parameters of what is normal, and thus he could be marginalized.

Michel argued that the series of meetings where he was on display and grilled about his intentions and actions, became a continuation of the discriminatory behaviours of his classmates and other students in the hallways. Michel was on trial for thinking he had the same rights as his student-colleagues, while the perpetrators of homophobic harassment were never interviewed and never reprimanded for their actions. Rather than guarantee Michel's right to equal access to schooling and all this implies, school professionals became part of and extended Michel's harassment. The net effect was that Michel and what he experienced were kept outside the parameters of what could be successfully dealt with by school professionals. Rather than excellence or equality, Michel's experiences were effectively disappeared from the high school and a heteronormative cloak closed over the school again. The discourses which maintain the illusions--that sexual minorities are deviant Others and all youth are heterosexual--worked effectively to maintain this social order. Any other sexual minority youth in the school stayed silent and all those in the school learned a basic lesson in exclusion, harassment, and hatred.

Charter Non-Case III: Oscar[5]

Oscar was an intense student. He loved English literature and had read far beyond what most friends and fellow-students had. He was witty and loved discussions and intellectual arguments. Oscar's written work was excellent and intense like him. He wrote poetry. Oscar was not afraid to address issues of his sexual identity in his written work or conversations. He was openly gay and even though this was something he struggled with because of his religious upbringing, his sexual identity was also something he was proud of and actively exploring.

Oscar realized he was "different" in elementary school, and recognized this difference as his sexual identity in junior high. Prior to junior high, Oscar thought his feelings of not fitting in were related to his religious practices and to the break up of his parents' marriage. When he was nine years old, he was curious and asked his father what homosexuality was and his father said it was when two people of the same sex love each other sexually. Oscar asked if this was okay and his father said yes. He came out to his mother first and Oscar found her supportive of his sexual identity. When he came out to his father, his father said he already knew and that it was fine with him. Having supportive parents gave Oscar confidence in himself and security that they would not love him less.

Oscar did not come out openly at school when he first realized he was gay. He was

[5]Named for Oscar Wilde.

very clear that school taught him little of positive value about himself or homosexuality and that it was only through outside cultural sources that he learned to value himself and know about others who were like him. Gradually, through his own reading of novels and queer publications, viewing television shows like *Roseanne* and *Oprah* with their positive affirmation of homosexuality and his involvement with the local youth group, Oscar decided that he had a right to live his life as openly as everyone else. For him, this meant being out at school. Throughout grade ten, Oscar became increasingly visible as a young gay. He talked about homosexuality in classes where this was appropriate and identifed himself as gay when this seemed right. At first, teacher and student reaction was minimal. Sometimes Oscar felt that others found him tiresome and boring, but mostly he experienced indifference from teachers and students. Some claimed that they already knew he was gay and were curious about what being gay meant for Oscar and other gay people. Oscar was happy to have an opportunity to talk about his experiences and what he knew about being gay.

In grade eleven things shifted. Oscar was never able to pin down what caused the shift. He knew the atmosphere was more antagonistic toward him but no particular reason or incident stood out. The school-year began with feelings of unease for Oscar. Some students began to hiss at him and call him names in the hallways but, when he turned to confront them, it was not clear who the perpetrators were. On other occasions students in the halls would call Oscar "faggot" and he would respond by saying that "no, we prefer gay most of the time." On other occasions, when he was called a faggot, Oscar would say "redneck" back and the name-caller would scowl at him. Oscar would say, "look, if you want to use derogatory labels toward me, I will respond in kind!" Oscar's sense of humour prevented him from feeling unsafe even as he felt more uneasy.

Because he felt school should provide him with information about "his people," Oscar requested that his school library carry gay positive magazines like *Out* or the *Advocate*. He was especially strong-minded about this since the library carried "homophobic magazines like the *Alberta Report*" in its collection. His requests were never successful. Given the increasing harassment in the halls, at one point, Oscar decided to conduct his own survey of homophobic actions in his school and over a five-day period observed sixty-four separate instances of either name-calling, shoving, or joking in a negative way. He shared this information with a counsellor at the school with whom he had talked before when he was depressed or felt suicidal. The counsellor said there was nothing the school could do about these incidents because no one else complained, the incidents were not witnessed, and homosexuality was taboo in schools anyway.

Several days later, in English class, Oscar went to the washroom and when he returned his day-timer had disappeared from the top of his desk. He knew it was there when he left because he had been doodling on the pages and always carried it to class with him. After class, he searched all the desks but his day-timer did not show up. He checked in the lost and found the next day and his day-timer had been turned in. On opening his daytimer, Oscar found the following words scrawled across the current day-timer pages: "faggots burn in hell." He was upset but decided to keep this to himself as his earlier complaints to the school counsellor were unheeded.

Several days later, Oscar's locker was defaced with the words "all faggots burn in hell" printed in ink across his locker. He did not want to take this incident seriously because whoever did the graffiti could not spell. When he related this incident to me[9], he also speculated on whom he could tell and felt his complaint would not be taken seriously anyway. When he told his story to his youth group, they expressed concern, telling Oscar that homosexuality as an identity is not banned in school and what was happening to him should not happen. The following Monday, Oscar complained to the counsellor who advised the principal and vice-principal. The graffiti was removed from his locker but several days later the same message was carved into the paint on his locker. Meanwhile, hallway hostilities toward Oscar remained unchecked.

When Oscar and his mother approached the school for solutions, they were advised that he might have to go to another school. The counsellor suggested that if Oscar was not so openly gay then these things would not happen. Both the counsellor and principal noted in a meeting with Oscar's mother that Oscar had escalated his openness about being gay so that everyone in the school knew. Meanwhile, the locker was scraped and repainted. Oscar and his mother decided he should stay in the school and "tough" it out for the balance of the school term. However, he changed schools after the term was over because the climate in the school was too hostile. Those who expressed concerned for his well-being at school were his mother, his youth support group, and me. School professionals, on the other hand, blamed Oscar and homosexuality for creating the situation.

The confluence of discourses about homosexuality and youth effectively prohibited any successful solution to the violence directed at Oscar and in fact, produced Oscar as social deviant in the school. School professionals failed to provide Oscar with the "excellence" in education mandated by Alberta Education. Again, as with Ellen, Oscar was blamed for the violence exercised against him because he was too openly gay. In the parlance of the school professionals, Oscar created the situation by being out. Yet, according to the *Canadian Charter*, fundamental freedoms such as freedom of religion, expression and association are protected rights guaranteed within the Charter. Section 15(1), in particular guarantees equality before and under the law and equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination. Oscar could charge his school, school professionals, school board, the Alberta Teachers' Association, and Alberta Education as all were involved in violation of his fundamental *Charter* rights.

As with Ellen and Michel, instead of ensuring Oscar had the same access to excellence and safety in his learning environment as other students had, school professionals became a part of the continuing violence exercised against Oscar. Oscar's school extended the epistemic violence, by insisting threats and harassment against him were Oscar's fault. In the production of social identities through schooling discursive practices, Oscar is produced as outside the normal, as unworthy of protection, as outside the purview of what can be countenanced within normalizing school discursive practices.

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[9]Our interviews began mid-point in the school year just as anti-gay harassment against Oscar was increasing.

As with Ellen and Michel, Oscar disappeared from his school. Heteronormativity was restored to the school and the idea that sexual minority youth do not exist was reaffirmed.

The *Canadian Charter of Rights*, the *Human Rights Act*, the provincial School Act and mission statements written by Alberta Education state, unequivocally, in one form or another, that all persons have the right to be treated equally. As Canadian legal theorist Bruce MacDougall writes "actions by schools or school boards are state actions subject to Charter scrutiny" (2000, p. 104). One must ponder along with MacDougall why so little legal attention has been paid to what are clearly Charter violations. Yet, rather than see discriminatory acts against Michel, Ellen, and Oscar as what they clearly are, school professionals are quick to turn issues of equal access and freedom of expression into issues of blaming, shaming and moralizing.

As importantly, the 1969 *Criminal Code Amendment* shapes the experiences of sexual minority youth by positing a dichotomy between public and private. The very naming of the existence of sexual minority youth in schools is a public spectacle. The conflation of persons with sexual actions, that is the over-determination or hyper-sexualization of sexual minority people in public space creates an imagined panic over sexual acts. Out or outed sexual minority youth, as with sexual minority adults, are equivalent in the heteronormative imagination, with the immorality of public sex. For sexual minority people to be safe, they must be private; that is, in the closet.

School authorities are able to abandon any moral responsibility to sexual minority youth, for whom they do have an ethical and professional commitment. Sexual minority youth are produced as outsiders to the discourse of equitable and fair treatment in education. As well, school authorities are yet another source of repressive disciplining in the production of sexual minority identity in Alberta schools. While individual counsellors, teachers, or administrators may feel badly about the outcomes, none of them are able to act in such a manner that heteronormative, homophobic education is disrupted.

Sexual minority youth are rendered as the Other to educational theory and practice even in the face of Canadian legal protections that allow for "sexual orientation" as a grounds for protection from harassment and discrimination. For Michel, Ellen, and Oscar, the protection of Canadian legislation in the late 1990s and the generic promises of provincial educational mandates or School Acts offer little improvement over the experiences of violence levelled at Doug Wilson at the University of Saskatchewan in 1976. In the late 1990s, as in the 1970s, this violence has the effect of increasing victimization by forcing the victimized out of school.

Emergence of Queer Sexuality as Post-Group Identity

Earlier I said that I am interested in a history of the present status of sexual minorities in Canada and particularly how this impacts on sexual minority youth in schools. In legal terms, the status of sexual minorities in Canada in the early part of the twenty-first century is largely defined by the provisions of Bill C23. Bill C23 has provided legitimation for lesbians and gay men that was unavailable prior to its enactment. It would be wrong to suggest, however, that the present for sexual minorities in Canada is fully

contained by Bill C23 and the conditions that made this bill possible. Bill C23 legitimates same-sex domestic partners, common law partners and of course married couples in a number of relationships with the federal state. These functions are hardly the limit for sexual identity or activity in this country.

There are many whose sexual identities are not recognized by law in Canada. Yet, these identities exist even if not recognized by law. These 'outlaw' identities have been created in popular culture including movies, the internet, music videos, alternative presses, bookstores and theatre, clubs, and activist discourse. Among these are the television shows, Ellen, Will and Grace, and Queer as Us; movies such as All About My Mother and Ma Vie en Rose; publications such as *The Advocate*, *Out*, and *Curve*; gay pride marches and the Gay Games, and queer figures such as Rupaul, Dennis Rodman, and Patrick Rice Califia, former leather dyke now transitioning to a male body and contemplating marriage to a gay man. Identities are also produced from resistance to such things as police raids, court decisions, and AIDS policy.

Popular cultural representations and performances of a range of sexualities disrupt the notion that the only sexual minorities in this country are adult same-sex couples who work and all of whom have the resources to take advantage of benefit packages, tax and immigration provisions. These representations and performances resist the normalization and domestication of sexual identity in legal discourse. They resist laws that ignore how sexual minorities, like everyone else, differentially access legal privileges by virtue of whether their ethnicity, age, gender, class, and ability are also recognized. Resistance to legally recognized same-sex partner status has occurred because sexual minorities outside this definition are now not only cast as abnormal in relation to the normal heterosexual, they are cast as abnormal in relation to legally recognized same-sex partners.

Resistance to attempts to normalize people is central to the emergence of 'queer' sexuality as a post-group identity in the 1990s and the early part of this century. To identify as queer is to resist regimes of normalcy (Warner, 1994). Queer politics and queer theory exposes and resists the way in which 'the heterosexual' is constructed as 'the norm' but it also exposes and resists discourses which attempt to normalize sexual minorities. Queer objects to how the terms 'lesbian' and 'gay' have been taken up in legal discourse to manage sexual difference and to how they have been utilized by those in sexual minority communities to control and judge personal identities and individual behaviors (Dinshaw & Halperin, 1993, pp. iii-iv). Queer is a strategy intended to disrupt identity distinctions. Queer is hybrid, partial, not fixed and stresses "the fractious, the disruptive, the irritable, the impatient, the unapologetic, the bitchy, the camp" (Dinshaw & Halperin, 1993, p. iv).

Sexual orientation, as it has been read into the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and subsequent legal decisions and legislation, has referred to the gender of a person's sexual object choice. On queer terms, fixing sexual orientation in this way is rigid and normalizing. Queer theorist Eve Sedgwick has indicated that

> [i]t is a rather amazing fact that, of the very many dimensions along which the genital activity of one person can be differentiated from that of another

(dimensions that include preference for certain acts, certain zones or sensations, certain physical types, a certain frequency, certain symbolic investments, certain relations of age or power, a certain species, a certain number of participants, etc. etc. etc.), precisely one, the gender of object choice, emerged from the turn of the century, and has remained as *the* dimension denoted by the now ubiquitous category of "sexual orientation" (1990, p. 8).

By questioning how sexual minority status has been produced by legal discourse, 'queer' also exposes how heterosexuality is limited by legal discourse. Not only does legal discourse confine sexual minority status to same-sex activity, heterosexual status is also constrained to include only those practices that can be understood when they occur in long term relationships. It is, however, no more possible for the law to fully contain or describe the various forms of heterosexuality than it is possible to contain or describe 'queer'.

History of the Present: Closing Remarks

I have identified some of the conditions of possibility for legal discourse at the beginning of the twenty-first century in Canada to produce a particular type of sexual minority status. I have introduced the notion of queer sexuality as fluid, partial, and opposed to normalization to underline how legal discourse fixes sexual identity and leaves intact the notion of a 'normal' sexuality.

'The homosexual' was produced as an identity category in Canada through social conditions that made it possible for people to congregate in urban centres and engage in sexual behaviors outside the purview of marriage and the heterosexual family. This category was consolidated by social purity movements, sexology, and legal discourse which cast homosexuals as sinners, mentally ill, or as criminals. The category also created positions from which individuals could resist these ascriptions and from which counter movements advocating for rights could be fought. Without the creation of a group identity for same-sex sexual activity, the decriminalization of same-sex sexual activity in the *Criminal Law Amendment Act*, reading in sexual orientation into the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Bill C23, and opposition to the Surrey School Board could not have emerged.

Bill C23 is striking in that it provides opportunities for inclusion in Canadian communities for people who, for more than half of the twentieth century, were subject to punishment for same-sex sexual activity. I do think it is worth emphasizing, however that, with heteronormativity as a basic premise of legal discourse in Canada, it is not possible for sexual minorities to be fully protected or acknowledged. The discussion about sexual minorities in education reveals how the interaction of multiple discourses, including Canadian legal discourse, produces outsider sexual identities with homophobic effects for those who hold these subject positions. It is important to notice that bringing sexual minorities into legal discourse only when they match up with legally recognized heterosexuals must continue to deny full inclusion in Canadian communities to those with

sexual practices that refuse to be fixed by legal and other discourses. For example, it is clear that schools are unable to deal with the contradictions presented by sexual minority youth and *Charter* rights discourse. The solution has been to refuse to countenance queer youth in schools so as to preserve the notion of sexually innocent children and sexually inactive youth who are vulnerable to predation and recruitment by homosexual adults.

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Queer Identities & Strange Representations in the Province of the "Severely Normal"

In October 1997, a group of students from Scona Composite High School in Edmonton approached local businesses, including Orlando Books, to place ads in their student newspaper. Scona High was close to home for me, less than two blocks from my residence and the school my son attended for one year. Jacqueline Dumas, owner of Orlando Books, obliged the students with an ad that included the phrase "books for lesbian and gay youth and their friends." A few days later, the student editor of the paper phoned to say that there was a problem using this phrase and that they would run the ad for free if the line could be deleted. Dumas declined this offer. Shortly after, the faculty adviser called Orlando Books and advised Dumas that the newspaper went out to all students and their parents. The ad, he said, was not inclusive because it did not include heterosexual students. Refusing the ad was in keeping with school policy. Dumas countered that the ad was inclusive since heterosexual students were included in the ad as "friends" and asked for a copy of the school policy. That the newspaper had such wide circulation seemed to be a red herring at first until it became more evident, through subsequent dialogue, that school professionals were afraid that inclusion of "controversial issues" would be evidence of the school's approval of the gay 'lifestyle' and this would reach parents and the community beyond the school.

> **Ever since I remember like in grade one they would call me "sissy" and "girl" and stuff. It wasn't until junior high that they actually called me "faggot." (Rupaul, 1998)**

The next day the principal, Rick Anderson, called Dumas and reiterated that the ad would be refused unless the words 'gay' and 'lesbian' were removed. The ad would be free if Dumas agreed to the deletion. Dumas refused the offer and the ad did not appear. In the words of Dumas, "he [school principal Anderson] must have thought that the stories about gays in the school library's copies of *Alberta Report* provided sufficient information for his students" (1998, p. 26).

> **I let enough people know ... it was time to be out. I was sick and tired of living a lie and I came out. People at school ask me if it is true and some call me faggot in the hall and I say, no we prefer gay most times. Sometimes I call them redneck which makes them mad. (Oscar, 1998)**

Representations about queer people are significantly absent throughout school curriculum just as policy towards enhancing the safety and well-being of queer youth is still uncommon. As I write this paper, a twelve page booklet I and three others have authored about safety issues for lesbian and gay youth is still circulating among an ever widening audience of school professionals in the province before the Alberta Teacher's

Association will release it for publication. Ostensibly, this unusual review process will strengthen our booklet by ensuring that we clear out all contentiousness prior to publication. Meanwhile, the *Alberta Report* (here after *AR*), a weekly magazine with wide distribution in the province, with its sensationalised representations of 'homosexuals', is unreviewed by school professionals or anyone else. Instead representations of 'homosexuality', *AR* style, are found in libraries, lurk on school shelves, rest on tables in doctors' and dentists' offices and on the coffee tables of Albertans, and influence and inform thinking, discussions and projects in classes on current events, social studies, and sexuality.

> **I think television is corruption. I think that television brings the ideal of the Brady Bunch, no matter how horribly corny that is and the Huxtables. I think all those are sort of "perfect" families...and have nothing intelligent about them. (Oscar, 1998)**

When I first began to investigate the conditions in which queer youth negotiate their identities in Alberta schools, my preliminary investigations were met with reactions from the local teacher's association that included: "no one does *that* kind of work here" and "we do not have any materials about *this topic* on hand". Consistent with the sensationalized production of queer Albertans in the *AR,* Alberta Education (now Alberta Learning) was able to provide me with one document that specifically mentioned "gays" and this had to do with sex education and HIV/AIDS. The over-determination of queer identities with gay maleness, disease, and pathology permeates the representation of sexual minorities in the *AR*, and is reiterated by Alberta Education.

> **I am very conscious about how I look. I go to the gym because I can't be fat. I'll go to the gym not to be healthy but just as long as I am not fat. I have to look good because I am gay. At least people cannot hold my looks against me. (Jack, 1998)**

The culture of silence that shrouds the lives of queer people also renders queer youth invisible, or if they are 'out', they are absent or evicted from school corridors through a variety of management strategies similar to those of Principal Anderson from Scona High School. Dumas' comment about the influence of the *AR* in schools underlines why paying attention to this magazine is so central to investigations of the lives of queer youth in Alberta schools. As well as being a ubiquitous presence in Alberta, the *AR* is remarkably the most complete and comprehensive coverage of queer issues in Alberta during the 1990s. Studying queer issues through this magazine provides a unique understanding of both mainstream and queer Alberta culture and politics.

> **I am very, very cautious. For the longest time I clung to my mother because I felt safe around her. She couldn't leave me because I was like, I wasn't safe. (Jack, 1998).**

"Different discursive formations and apparatuses divide, classify and inscribe the body differently in their respective regimes of power and 'truth'" (Hall 1997, p. 50). The social effect of these different bodily divisions, classifications, and inscriptions is the production of some bodies that matter (Butler, 1993); that is, the production of relations of power that produce some bodies as normative and others as deviant. This paper is an examination of how all Albertans, not just queer Albertans, are effects of relations of power. I refuse to accept that sexual minority issues are concerns of only a small number of people and not of central concern for most people (Sedgwick, 1990).

In this paper, I identify some of the discourses that operated in Alberta from 1992 to 1998 as represented in the *AR* and by elected officials and other citizens in the province. These discourses represented queer bodies as bodies that are sinful, disgusting, hyper-sexualized, diseased, criminal, deviant, predatory, gay and therefore male, adult, white, without family and especially family values, and either as shadowy spectral figures shrouded in secrecy or as a militant and extreme group of vociferous gay political activists.

As the 1990s unfolded, the signatory case regarding 'homosexuality' in the province, was the case that turned Delwin Vriend, Alberta citizen, into the *Vriend* case. In 1988 Delwin Vriend was given a permanent, full-time position as a lab instructor at King's College, Edmonton, Alberta. When asked by the college president Vriend disclosed he was gay in 1990. In January 1991 the college adopted a position statement on homosexuality and Vriend was asked to voluntarily resign. When he refused, Vriend was fired. Vriend attempted to file a complaint of wrongful dismissal with the Alberta Human Rights Commission and was told the commission could not act on his complaint because sexual orientation was not included in the *Individual Rights Protection Act*. On November 27, 1993 Vriend took his case to the Court of Queen's Bench and on April 13, 1994, Justice Anne Russell ruled that Alberta's human rights law was inconsistent with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the provincial act must include sexual orientation. On May 5, 1994 the Alberta government decided to appeal and on February 23, 1996 the Court of Appeal of Alberta ruled in favour of the government in a decision by Justice John McClung. On May 6, 1996 Vriend decided to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada which agreed to hear the case. On November 4, 1997 the Supreme Court hearings began. The Supreme Court heard from seventeen interveners, including religious and civil liberties groups. On April 2, 1998 the Supreme Court ruled that Alberta's human rights law was unconstitutional and must protect people from discrimination based on their sexual orientation thus effectively changing Alberta's human rights code.

Prior to *Vriend*, the Alberta Human Rights Commission had tried on several occasions, with no success, to have sexual orientation written into the *Individual Rights and Protection Act*. The refusal of Alberta's elected politicians to provide human rights protection together with the *Vriend* case made Alberta a province unique in Canada for state produced and sanctioned homophobia. Recognizing the role the Alberta government played in the production of sexual minority deviance and the relentless obsession of the *AR* with 'homosexuality' is vital to understanding how the queer youth in this study understood their place in this province. These queer youth lived their identities in the

cultural vacuum of school and family in which virtually no content about homosexuality existed, while widespread heterosexism and outbreaks of homophobic harassment were, and still are, common.

> **I started out in junior high, basically, with three big stigmas attached to me. One I knew I was gay. That was probably the biggest one. This internal knowledge that no matter what I am, I am different from just about everybody else around me. And this is a big problem. And two, we had just moved to that area. And three, I was just an average student. But being gay was the biggest stigma. (Svend, 1998)**

> **I could never really fit in anywhere. I think it had something to do with my sexuality. In fact I am sure of it because I'm sure that at that age there was something happening inside of me. Like inside my mind. It seemed around the time my sister passed away I started gaining weight, excessive pounds. Because I would go into myself, mourning her death and knowing I was different. (Jack, 1998)**

I utilize a number of strategies to present the material in this paper. The text is marked off periodically by significant dates in the *Vriend* case and this is often followed by a barrage of headlines from the *AR* that intensify in number and sensationalism as the case gets closer to a decision by the Supreme Court. I also quote extensively from some of the editorials and 'news' pieces from the *AR* to illustrate the ferocity of the agitation about 'homosexuality' represented there. The voices of the queer youth are meant to disrupt these representations of the 'disgusting homosexual' while also contrasting the complexity of their lives with the reductive, hate mongering of the *AR* with which these youth had to contend. A range of life exigencies were important to these young people and often more important as the central issues in their lives than was their sexuality.

The presentation of headlines, excerpts, interview material, and analysis is not meant to be an easy read. The fragmentary representation is undertaken deliberately to underscore the absurdity of the coherent narrative of the deviant 'homosexual' portrayed by the *AR* and, as well, to insist on the humanness of the youth in this study. I refuse to render the richness and diversity of these young people's lives into a tidy box of statements and stories. Thus I intend this text to be exhausting--as exhausting as living life as a queer youth in Alberta during the 1990s was.

The theme of "moral panic" is evident throughout the text. Moral panic can be understood as

> [a] condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotyped fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, and politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and

> solutions; ways of coping are evolved, or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates. Sometimes the panic is passed over and forgotten, but at other times it has more serious and long-term repercussions and it might produce changes in legal and social policy or even in the way in which societies conceive themselves. (Kinsman, 1996, p. 45)

The hysteria or panic over homosexuality was never submerged, passed over or forgotten in the *AR*. Sensationalised accounts of homosexuality pulsed weekly with at least three editorials, articles, or letters concerned with 'homosexuals' as a group of persons who were a threat to societal values and interests. For many Albertans, queer and otherwise, the only information seemingly available about homosexuality came from the *AR*.

> **The most important event for me was the death of my sister. I was in grade one when she died. I still hate fall, that time of year. My mother and I only had each other pretty much, after that. My dad was gone a lot and not very talkative anyway. (Jack, 1998)**

The *AR* takes up moral-theological, medico-moral and human rights discourses to denounce 'homosexuality' which has had the effect of keeping even the more moderate of elected representatives in the province off balance and on the defensive. The *AR* took on human rights discourse by claiming that protective rights for sexual minorities were actually "special rights". This argument fallaciously, but effectively for some, hijacked attention away from the fact that sexual minorities have been socially produced as different, or special, and that this production of a hierarchy of human subjects, as heterosexual and homosexual, was the reason that protections were needed for homosexuals.

The *AR* was able to work homophobic discourse for their own purposes because most elected members of the Alberta legislature and others in the province already believed much of what was represented about 'homosexuality' by the *AR*. Members of the Legislative Assembly, such as Stockwell Day, Victor Doerksen, Lorne Taylor and others, were informed by fundamentalist Christian discourse, which made them allies of the publishers of the *AR*, Ted and Virginia Byfield and their offspring. Within this Christian fundamentalism, the value of the patriarchal family and the necessity of a separation from the evils of contemporary living are dominant themes.

> **I am really discouraged by living in the prairies because its as if we [gays] don't exist or we are openly disliked, even hated....on one side we have a very gay friendly atmosphere and on the other side we have the Stockwell Days and the Rutherford's and the Alberta Reports of the world and the Ted Byfields. (Oscar, 1998)**

Believing that they are born into sin, fundamentalist Christians *AR* style, see themselves and their offspring as constantly tempted by the pleasures of the flesh and, therefore, particularly vulnerable to the sins of any form of sexuality outside of procreative and heterosexual marital relations. The "sins" of homosexuality, pleasurable and non-creative sexuality, are especially vexing to them. Stockwell Day explicitly used his position as MLA to turn his form of Christianity into state policy thus imposing an even more rigid hierarchy of sexuality on all Albertans than that of other MLAs. Premier Ralph Klein tried to balance politics between that of the "severely normal" (reference to come) Albertan, normal or average Albertans who were like himself, and the abnormal, thus successfully avoiding unpopularity that might arise if he enshrined human rights protections for gays and lesbians in the province.

> Klein tried to create the impression that he was caught between two extreme points of view, and managed to orchestrate a spectacle which was like a boxing match with himself as the beleaguered referee in the middle. (Dumas 1998, p. 28)

It [sister's death] made me a very cautious individual. I look at things twice and I value life. Because it could be there one day and it could be gone the next. Things can change drastically. (Jack, 1998)

Moralizing discourses about homosexuality, whether theological or medico-psychological, are highly potent for queer youth because youth are economically dependent on adults, usually family, who demand from youth a moratorium on sexuality and employment (Cote & Allahar, 1996). Family is premised on rigid ideas regarding gender roles. Youth are expected to be sexually innocent that is inactive, yet heterosexual, and therefore homosexuality in youth, is rarely countenanced by parents or other adults.

The *Alberta Report*: Marshalling the Struggle

I remember in grade seven I was picked on again. I had been studying and studying and I started to put my mask on, because I knew I was gay. I looked at this gym teacher a certain way, and I knew. And these guys came and pulled my jogging pants down right to my ankles. I was so fat I could only wear jogging pants. Oh, I was so embarrassed but I couldn't cry because you would be called a sissy. I just pulled them up and went to class and I knew I wanted to be more and more emotional about what happened. It was horrible. (Jack, 1998)

In celebration of their first twenty-five years of publication, editor-operators of the *AR* produced a special edition in January 11, 1999 in which they summarized the first twenty-five years. The following quote tells some of this story.

> We learned one other lesson in the latter 1980s, as we started branching out with other editions, first *Western* and *then B. C. Report.* Instead of reverting to clear conservatism on the social issues of the day, we began to drift, subtly, into what could be called "lifestyle" coverage. That is, we gradually lost our interest in the deeper and more difficult questions posed by *sex, family, school, and faith.* There was a reason for this drift. *Back in the 1970s, weirdo things like radical feminism and gay rights could be dismissed, at least in Alberta, as an amusing madness.* But by the late-1980s they couldn't. They had become rooted in public policy everywhere, underlying social programs, court rulings, and school curriculum....well, values-neutral is not just gutless, it is dull, *and circulation was slipping anyway.* (Byfield, Jan. 11, 1999, p.19, emphasis added)

Keeping their eye on a formula for fiscal success, those in charge of the *AR* determined that their 1980s approach did not sell magazines and that the 1990s would reverse this trend. The following is a summary of the issues *AR* took on in the 1990s:

> In 1990 we got back on course. We challenged the feminist sacred cow on campus ("Women's Studies–academics or propaganda?," Jan. 7, 1991), nut-case environmentalism ("Father Earth," May 11, 1992), the global thrust for what are deceptively promoted as "children's rights" (The Pied Piper of Ottawa," Aug. 8, 1994), poisonous but powerful liberal currents in the churches ("See no evil," July 8, 1996), and Ottawa's continuing abdication of responsibility for Indian justice ("Canada's mythical holocaust," Jan. 26, 1998). We once again, adopted causes: gun owners' rights, removal of abortion from medicare, direct democracy and taxpayer activism. *We attacked as provocatively as we could the fatuous and sinister new acceptance of the gay lifestyle; it reached its apogee with our Aug. 16, 1993, cover "Can gays be cured?"* ...but the theme which re-emerged in our pages in the '90s which dwarfs all others in significance is that of *the family.* (Byfield, 1999, p.19, emphasis added)

Issues such as feminism, environmentalism, Aboriginal rights, along with homosexuality are interrelated because, according to the *AR*, they are threats to their concept of the family. According to the *AR*, 'the good' is exemplified by white, Eurowestern descendants who are progressive yet traditional, natural yet highly cultured, and who are ordained by God to live within a traditional family, with "man" as dominant over the planet and all other life forms on it. The *AR* family is heterosexual and nuclear; that is, it is a father led family with two parents of 'opposite' sexes.

He [father] has called a couple of times but he was drunk. But I don't really care. I don't miss him or anything because I have never been so abused, or emotionally abused. I just have bad memories of him. (Rupaul, 1998)

This is a family that, "left to itself... very naturally resumes its ageless pattern: father-led, mother-inspired and child-centred" (Byfield, Jan 11, 1999, pp.20). This family form, according to the *AR*, has existed timelessly across the history of "mankind" but is now increasingly under threat as it has been "invaded, plundered and demoralized over the last generation" (Byfield, Jan. 11, 1999, p.20). Queer people, reduced in the *AR* to 'homosexuals', pose a particularly nasty threat to the viability of this family structure.

And I was like reading my Bible, like thinking "Oh my God, maybe this will bring my mom back to me." You know, like I don't know. I mean, I have lost a lot of parents. I have lost two sets of parents in the past, so I have always felt like, if I lost this set, my adoptive parents, I wouldn't ever be the same. My biological parents, well my mom didn't die until I was twelve and my father passed away when I was five. But I was five when I left my biological mum. I shouldn't say left because I was taken away. These people in Smalltown, Alberta were going to adopt me and I thought they had, I was using their name and they told me they couldn't adopt me. My foster dad really cried about this. So I go these new foster parents and they adopted me. And I love my adopted mom so much but now she booted me out because I'm you know, gay. (Jill, 1998)

The *AR* drew the battle lines. Queer folks were to go back into their closets along with environmentalists, feminists, human rights activists, Aboriginal peoples, and pretty much everyone else who was not a conservative fundamentalist Christian like those in the Byfield family. That this minority group of people could effectively launch an all out attack that contributed to mini moral panics about homosexuality continuously throughout the 1990s, climaxing in a major homophobic moral panic in the wake of the Supreme court decision on Vriend, is testimony to the resonance elsewhere in the province of the representations of homosexuality that AR proliferated.

I went to class and that is when I really started burying myself in my studies. I started being a real geek...a very smart person, someone who is very keen. (Jack, 1998)

January, 1991: Vriend is fired from King's College for being a homosexual.

Kissing n' Telling in Banff, Alberta, November 1992

In November of 1992, the Walter Phillips Gallery, part of the Banff Centre for the Arts, hosted a ninety minute performance, *True Inversions*, as part of its three-month long celebration entitled, "Much Sense: Erotics and Life." This work by Vancouver's Kiss & Tell, consisted of a film and live talk performance that included a visual and oral exploration of lesbian sexual practices. While lesbian sex is often conflated with gay male sex or erased by "what do lesbians do in bed? rhetoric, evasion or effacement of lesbian sex was not possible with *True Inversions.* Graphic black and white photographs of the Kiss & Tell collective members, stories, vignettes, mini plays, all made lesbian sex public.

Taking note of this public display of lesbian sex and dedicated to boosting flagging readership with gutsy and lively reporting, *AR* sent reporter, Rick Bell, to cover the performance and investigate funding for "the latest in subsidized 'alienation' and lesbian porn" (December 7, 1992, p. 33). Bell revealed that the Banff Centre was provincially funded with fourteen and a half million dollars from John Gogo's Department of Advanced Education while the Walter Phillips Gallery was specifically granted fifteen thousand dollars from the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism headed by Doug Main. Kiss & Tell was funded by Canada Council, a federal agency involved in funding the arts.

> **You know I hated phys. ed, I went in and tried...even though I had lost a lot of weight. My body was still large and I couldn't do a lot of things. And I was so scared of this one guy, he was so hyper masculine. This hyper-masculine guy was so strong I did not want to be around him at all and he was the captain of the football team. (Jack, 1998)**

> **I come from a pretty normal family. My mum happened to read an email I sent to a friend visiting Australia in which I wrote about my first sexual experience with another woman I met a the bar. She never said anything to me right then, but at the next Teacher's Convention she got a bunch of information about lesbians and gays from a table there. (Chastity, 1998)**

Culture and Multiculturalism Minister, Doug Main, responded with a letter to the editor of *AR* which was published on December 21, 1992. Main admonished the *AR* for their "slavish devotion to point-making at the expense of good journalism" (*AR*, p. 4). He was especially offended that the story and cartoon made the suggestion that he was personally responsible for, supportive of, and even proud to be involved with *True Inversions*. Main accused the *AR* of being ignorant of facts, especially the fact that "the minister of culture is not the arbiter of taste in Alberta" but is rather responsible for the provision of infra-structural support which allows for artistic expression within the

province. Departmental support for the arts, according to Main, ought not to be confused with his personal support for a specific work, in this case the work of Kiss & Tell. Main finished his long letter with the following statement.

> By the way, I think the event and its line-up of performances was disgusting. I wasn't asked to provide any special specific funding for this event. If I had been asked I would have said "No!" (*AR*, December 21, 1992, p. 4)

Link Byfield responded to Main's letter with an editorial in which he stated that, if "Mr. Main wasn't responsible for subsidizing those Banff lesbians, then who was?" (December 21, 1992, p. 2). Byfield's editorial referred to *True Inversions* as a performance by a "troupe of foul-mouthed, sex-obsessed Vancouver lesbian activists." Further he admonished Main with, "if Mr. Main says he isn't responsible for making us pay women to masturbate in public, then who does he think is?" (December 21, 1992, p.2). Speculating as to what Main might say if he properly shouldered the responsibility of his portfolio, Byfield wrote:

> Please be advised that as minister responsible for cultural subsidies I am accountable to the voters and taxpayers of Alberta for what you do. When we take their money we owe them the courtesy of respecting common norms of decency and religious tolerance. (December 21, 1992, p. 4)

Byfield, not surprisingly, misrepresented lesbian sexuality as "masturbation," as well as misunderstanding the role of government funding in relation to the arts. He did not, however, misunderstand the seriousness of bringing 'homosexual' issues into the public realm and the consequences of making government members squirm at being implicated in such a 'scandal'.

In the same edition of the *AR*, under the heading "Albertans," queer, Edmonton writer Candas Jane Dorsey is lauded for winning a prestigious award for her speculative fiction "Learning About" from a collection of her short stories titled *Machine Sex*. Given their stance on Kiss & Tell, there can be little doubt *Machine Sex* was unread by anyone at the *AR* as the volume of queer and sexual content in this collection is substantial and therefore ought to have caused another outburst from the *AR* over "taxpayer dollars."

The panic engendered by the *AR* coverage of Kiss & Tell continued elsewhere in the province and into the new year. In the words of Kiss & Tell member Susan Stewart, the "offshoot of the *Alberta Report* article was a syndicated story that appeared in at least twenty little community papers sprinkled throughout Alberta, Manitoba, and environs" (1994, p.72). Kevin Avram focussed more intensively on taxpayer dollars. Three headlines making use of Avram's story are from the *Hanna Herald* of Hanna, Alberta, "Government coffers are never empty for 'art'"(January 20, 1993); the *Watson Witness* of Canora, Saskatchewan, "Even lesbianism is government funded" (January 6, 1993); and the *West-Central Crossroads* of Kindersley, Saskatchewan "Tax dollars funding smut"

(January 6, 1993). Adding to the mix, Deputy Premier of Alberta, Ken Kowalski pronounced, "I most definitely do not endorse this. It's totally inappropriate" as reported on January 15, 1993 in the *Edmonton Sun* under a title stating that the performance was "god-awful" (p.24). Like Avram, Kowalski did not actually see the performance. Kowalski went further with his negative judgement of Kiss & Tell, however. The *AR* reports that Mr. Kowalski asked Advanced Education Minister Jack Ady to speak to institutions like the Banff Centre and "tell them such shows are not acceptable if the public is footing the bill" (*AR*, February 1, 1993, p. 43).

Implied by this is that only some Albertans, those who work and are heterosexual, pay taxes. Sexual minorities, including lesbians, do work and do pay taxes. This is "assiduously damaging" and "more effective in furthering a deeply homophobic right-wing agenda" (Kiss & Tell, 1993, p.72) because it implies as well, that sexual minority cultural events, unlike other cultural events, are completely unworthy of any kind of government sponsorship. Politicians and other concerned citizens do not actually have to read or view a thing; they simply have to read or hear about it from the *AR*. If it was related to homosexuality, they pronounced a judgment, demanded censorship, and threatened the withdrawal of funding.

> **My teachers never had anything to do with it. Like, they never stopped anything. They downplayed the name calling and stuff. It was ignored. I realized that if something was going to happen, I would have to do it myself. (Greg, 1998)**

Pejoratives such as 'unacceptable', 'disgusting', 'spectacle', 'lesbian porn', 'foul-mouthed', 'sex-obsessed', 'sacrilegious obscenities', 'women masturbating in public', 'perversion', and so on were juxtaposed with notions like respecting common norms of decency and religious tolerance. As well, a new twist was introduced to this proliferation with Main's reference to "special specific" in relation to homosexuality. This phrase worked its way into another statement by Ady and then became part of the cant from Community Development Minister, Dianne Mirosh who railed against "special rights for homosexuals."

Add to this the opining of Alberta politicians, like Kowalski and Main, as well as other media and you have a potent mix of homophobic discourse informing public knowledge about the sexual identities of queer Albertans. Those most vulnerable to adult phobias however, are queer and questioning youth who are both financially and emotionally dependent on parents, teachers, and other adults around them.

> **I was totally lost in the medication and was actually set up for an operation [to begin transitioning]. I was kinda, when I first agreed to it, the only reason I agreed to the operation was that maybe this was a way to get my parents back. Well maybe, if I become a guy and I am straight then, well hey, then they are going to love me, right. (Jill, 1998)**

An effect that the *AR* did not likely intend was their publicity for the work of Kiss & Tell and the positive effects this had for breaking silence regarding lesbianism and lesbian sexuality. The formation of a 'homosexual' group identity through discourses of sin, crime, and public-bad/private-good sex has almost completely been about sexual minority men, usually white males. This effacement of lesbians was disrupted in Alberta with the *AR*'s reporting on *True Inversions*.

Rights Talk: Specifying, Specific and Special

While then Federal Justice Minister, Kim Campbell, undertook to recognize legal rights for sexual minorities, the *AR* stated that "Alberta courts and legislators have for the most part resisted pressure from the gay lobby to accede to demands for similar legislative action" (Frey, December 21, 1992, p. 9). This comment was made in an article written in response to Alberta Human Rights Commission (hereafter AHRC) Chief Commissioner Sayeed's decision to investigate complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation in the wake of federal changes to the Canadian Human Rights Act. Sayeed's decision was in keeping with other AHRC requests to change the *Individual Rights Protection Act* (hereafter IRPA) on three prior occasions. Labour Minister Elaine McCoy supported Sayeed, stating that he had not overstepped his mandate or exceeded his authority, both of which were suggested by *AR*. In support of *AR*'s position, MLA Jack Ady indicated that it would be a mistake to single out small minorities in legislation. He added that, "the act should protect people as Albertans, not as a member of this or that group. The question is, where does it end when you start specifying specific groups?" (Frey, December 21, 1992, p. 9).

AR contended in this article that there was little evidence to suppose that homosexuals were discriminated against and they were not in need of human rights protections. As evidence, *AR* relied on an unnamed 1988 survey of 25,000 consumers in which the reported average income of male homosexuals was sixty-two thousand dollars and that most gay men had some post-secondary education in comparison to only twenty per cent of the general population. A lesbian who was fired from her work with a deaf boy from a Christian family because of her sexuality was offered as further evidence as to why homosexuals do not require human rights protection. When homosexuality is pitted against Christian values which includes notions of traditional family as heterosexual and nuclear, according to the *AR*, common sense favours Christian values.[1]

Yeah, its Alberta. And they sort of hide under that pretense of 'it's equality for all.' Because I really believe that there are people out there who really believe that if everyone is equal then

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[1]This contradicts the recent (2001) Supreme Court decision in favour of Trinity College which found that teachers are able to teach without imposing their personal values on students. This is yet another instance of double standard on the part of fundamentalist Christian groups as they rely on the notion that their members can teach or work with all children and youth without imposing their values but that "homosexuals" cannot.

we don't need that special sort of clause in there. But really they are just deluding themselves...because being that Alberta is so conservative sort of thing, and then we have the Reform and its very right wing we do not have equality in this province. (Virginia, 1998)

Federal politicians found themselves entering the discourse with their own policy changes and ruminations. Justice Minister, Kim Campbell, introduced a bill to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA) with a number of changes, the most contentious according to *AR* being the inclusion of sexual orientation as a "human characteristic worthy of special protection" (Woodard, December 28, 1992, p. 26). Calgary North MP Al Johnson, member of a group of Tory MPs dubbed the Family Caucus declared, "I don't think 'sexual orientation' needs to be named as something we protect. If we start naming all the things government should protect, where will it end? Will we include protection of obesity next?" (Woodard, December 29, 1992, p. 26). Johnson implicitly acknowledged the need for protection of queer folks but clearly preferred to ignore the reality. Naming sexual orientation makes the realities of discrimination public.

It is really hard to come out. The kids are sort of coming out silently, in their own little groups. But there is no sort of acceptance. In Vancouver, it's no big deal. (Virginia, 1998)

Being discriminated against is a shameful secret, a form of deviance not even worthy of mention in public discourse because of fears that human rights for sexual minorities are special rights which will slide down the slippery slope toward gay family rights.

Do gays even smoke? Gay clubs are serving as a distribution network for the smuggled smokes, reports the firm. (AR, December 21, 1992, p. 30)

From Special Specific to Special Rights: Dianne Mirosh

I think it is way worse to be a dyke in Alberta than anywhere else in Canada. But if I had to choose, it is better in Edmonton than it is in Calgary. (Virginia, 1998)

January 18, 1993 found a new champion for the growing cultural war over gay rights, according to the cover of *AR*. Titled "Homophobe' or Heroine?, a six page report asked the question "can Mirosh stop the gays? (Woodard, January 18, 1993, pp. 6-11). *AR* signalled with this headline that they and others expected government resistance to rights for homosexuals. The cover featured a rather boxy and dykey looking Mirosh with her right hand up in a gesture which evoked a pledge of allegiance to *AR* and their agenda

and, as well, suggested an official 'stop' to the homosexual rights movement. In her other hand she held a book which may have been a Bible.

Mirosh, rookie Community Development Minister, became an instant heroine with *AR* when she stated "gays and lesbians are having more rights than anybody else" along with her intention to investigate the matter. Mirosh also declared that "a lot of heterosexuals feel uncomfortable about this" (Woodard, January 18, 1993, p. 6). These statements were made in relation to AHRC's Sayeed's willingness to investigate claims of discrimination against homosexuals. Sayeed made his statements between the ushering out of the Getty government and the incoming Klein government in which Mirosh was a new member. Both the *Edmonton Journal* and *Calgary Herald* decried her as a homophobe even as *AR* claimed her as a proud but quaking heroine. Link Byfield wrote an editorial piece prefacing the special report on Mirosh and gay rights with the statement that "the rise of the homosexual rights agenda" had the Klein cabinet tied in knots and Mirosh hiding under her desk (1993, p.2). Further, claimed Byfield, when it came to sodomy (his favoured expression in describing homo-sexual practices) most people have the sensible attitude that "what those people do with themselves is their business, not mine...yet somehow those people keep making it our business, whether we want it or not" (1993, p.2).

In this editorial Byfield wondered why gays couldn't just go away and do whatever it is they did without laying guilt trips on others. Rather than stay private, homosexuality had become a public and odious form of "hyper-political" activity, according to Byfield, in which a significantly noisy element of queer people terrorized "poor Mrs. Mirosh" while seeking the right to feel good about themselves in public. Byfield concluded his editorial by admonishing that, "if they want their personal habits to remain private, they should stop making them so public" (1993, p. 2).

When told by an *Edmonton Journal* reporter that sexual orientation was not yet protected by the IRPA, Mirosh's surprise exposed her ignorance. Continuing pressure from Sayeed and former AHRC chair, Fil Fraser, along with mainstream press coverage and organized gay community activity had the effect of turning the story national with CBC coverage. Mirosh made more statements about the discomfort of the "majority of Albertans." Sayeed stated she was over-reacting and another former head of the commission, Marlene Antonio, called for Mirosh's resignation. Other Alberta politicians stepped into the fray.

Tory cabinet minister, Ernie Isley, declared "if the human rights commission does not stop acting on homosexual claims, they will have to be stopped" (Woodard, Jan. 19, 1993, p. 7). Sayeed admitted in an interview shortly after that the AHRC was not proceeding with any investigations. Inadvertently invoking Kiss & Tell's *Drawing the Line* art show, mounted in Edmonton's Latitude 53 Gallery the previous year, amongst other battle line analogies, *AR* reported, that

> in one small theatre of the continuing culture war between the traditional family and 'progress,' by a narrow margin, and only temporarily, the line has once again been held. If Alberta democracy does hold the line, then it

may avoid having to undertake serious repairs later on. (Woodard, January 18, 1993, p. 7)

According to the *AR*, the war marched on. Homosexual rights were pitted against traditional family. Homosexual rights were special rights, that is rights that no one else seemed to have. Homosexual rights were "'elite' rights of a well educated and wealthy minority thus the homosexual movement was already very powerful" (Woodard, January 18, 1993, p. 7). According to Woodard of the *AR*, homosexual lobbying had become so powerful that American commentators referred to the lobbying as the new McCarthyism. Figures on money in support of AIDS research were used as evidence of the strength of this powerful homosexual agenda. "Why", asked Woodard, "are gays so militantly asserting their status as victims?" Quoting from author William Donohue, Woodard answered this question for readers.

> Tell a militant homosexual that he already has toleration. He'll explode with indignation. Toleration's not enough; he wants social affirmation.....why should affirmation be so important.....their lifestyle constantly brings them in contact with death. But they can't cheat death the way the rest of us do, by having children who carry on after us. If they're going to reproduce, they have to do it politically, basically by taking over other people's children. (January 18, 1993, p. 8)

Fears of homosexual predators taking over other people's children exist alongside assumptions that other people's children are not homosexual, that homosexuals themselves do not have children, and that all humans are cheaters who defy death with reproduction of self through one's genes. Further, children and youth are commodified; they are owned by parents or taken over by homosexuals. That children and youth may have some agency beyond this is incomprehensible to the *AR*.

The utter vulnerability of heterosexual youth to seduction by homosexuals positions them as morally weak, which in fact requires "special" protections for them. The vulnerability of fragile, traditional families to gay threats is implicit as well. These families may simply collapse under the weight of the gay agenda.

The centrality of reproductive sex within the sanctity of heterosexual marriage is a cornerstone of the *AR*'s beliefs as is the sexual innocence of children and youth.

> **I was involved with a worker at the Ben Calf Robe Society and I don't know. When I first told her, she was like "really, oh that is so cool. You know most native people like way back when anybody that was like, any native people that ended up coming out to their tribe, they were really respected anyway." I didn't know that and some day, after I get my brother away from my adoptive parents I'm going to find out more about that. (Jill, 1998)**

The invocation of homosexuals as threats to children, youth, adults, and traditional families was not enough for the *AR*. The report continued with attention to the "progressive compulsions" of homosexual behaviours. Productive work as teachers, nurses, counsellors, MLA's, lawyers, garbage collectors, students, athletes, actors, plumbers, performance artists, researchers, professors, or as children or youth did not figure in the behaviours listed. Significantly, as well, homosexual behaviours did not include any behaviours related to family and kin. The idea that homosexuality is mutually exclusive of youth, work and family operated throughout *AR* narratives. Refusal to understand queer people as human beings who exceed sexual practices was explicit in these denials of other information about queer lives. Instead the *AR* presents the following data culled from a right wing research foundation network[2] supported by fundamentalist Christians in the United States.[3]

> [F]rom a quarter to two-fifths of gays engage in some form of torture-sex, anywhere from a sixth to two-thirds (depending on the survey) report having sex in public washrooms and two-thirds sex in gay bathhouses....90% of homosexuals use illegal drugs...yet most disturbing is the high incidence of sex with minors...according to sociologists A. Bell and M. Weinberg in their book *Homosexualities,* 25% of adult white gays admit to sex with boys 16 or younger..between one-quarter and one-third of homosexual men and women are alcoholics....homosexuals are at least six times more likely to commit suicide than heterosexuals...with so much indiscriminate contact, homosexuals would probably spread infection even if they only kissed....90% of practicing homosexuals engage in anal sex, and over two-thirds in mouth-to-anus contact....the vast majority of homosexuals ingest medically significant amounts of human feces, with 5% to 10% eating or "wallowing" in them...and despite propaganda to the contrary, AIDS is still overwhelmingly a homosexual disease...homosexual medical problems begin with compulsive promiscuity....even sky divers live longer than homosexuals....even homosexuals dying from other causes survive, on average, to only 41...(Woodard, January 18, 1993, pp. 9-11).

Given *AR* objections elsewhere in this "special report" to the actual numbers of

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[2]The same names appear over and over again throughout the 1990s: Dr. Joseph Nicolosi, author of *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality* and clinical director of the Thomas Aquinas Psychological Clinic in Encino, California; Gwen Landolt of REAL Women; Paul Cameron, psychologist and chairman of Washington's Family Research Institute; Paul Genius of National Foundation for Family Research and Education (NFFRE) in Calgary; Hermina Dykshoorn of Alberta Federation of Women United for Families (AFWUF); Roy Beyer of Canada Family Action Coalition (CFAC), Edmonton, and finally John Mckellar of Homosexuals Opposed to Pride Extremism (HOPE), Toronto. The latter, a homosexual is ostensibly to provide balanced reporting.

[3]See Didi Herman's *The antigay agenda: Orthodox vision and the Christian right* (1997) and Chris Bull & John Gallagher's *Perfect enemies: The religious right, the gay movement, and the politics of the 1990s* (1996) for documentation of these relationships.

homosexuals thought to exist, it is difficult to understand why *AR* gave credence to these statistics. Nevertheless, this litany of characteristics of the 'homosexual' by the *AR* is made available to Alberta schools and used as resource materials. Special rights, persuasive powers beyond those of the normal Albertan, sexual practices linked to a series of pathologies, diseased and dying bodies, death at a young age, sex with heterosexual minors who have been preyed upon, are the representations that queer youth and other students have access to in schools.

> **So I just left and said whatever. I was just glad to get away from that guy because he scared me so much. But then it went through the whole class that I was a dirty pig. And I was still chunky and I was called a dirty pig and a filthy animal and don't touch the basketball if he plays with it. I got so uncomfortable I started to sweat and I started to perspire so much that I couldn't control it...as soon as I got to phys ed. So I went home and I was totally stressed out. I remember thinking what am I going to do, now what am I going to do. So I went to the counsellor and went home and said I've got to get out of this class. I didn't tell them anything, I just said I've got to get out of this class. No one understood, I still believe that no one really understood what I was going through. I finally did get out but they gave me the run-around. (Jack, 1998)**

As if this litany was not enough to frighten off the "average Albertan",[4] the *AR* included another article in the same edition, titled "The next step: lessons on same-sex love: Alberta considers introducing a homosexuality-friendly sex-ed course" (January 18, 1993, p. 9). Given the link between homosexuality and immoral and criminal activities, parents and educators alike were advised to be vigilant. Special rights for gays was the slippery slope down which everyone in Alberta would slide towards depravity. Meanwhile, as the new elite coalition of "homosexuals, feminists, and other civil rights advocates" (Woodard, January 18, 1993, p. 10) marched toward queer anarchy, hero government minister Mirosh "bends but does not break", reiterating her intent to recommend against the inclusion of "special rights" based on sexual orientation (Gunter, January 25, 1993, p. 10).

> **And you know, it was all this rigamarole that was unnecessary and you know and that is where I think if there was a system in place. And I think they did see things because the teacher said, oh yeah well we had this thing about discrimination in class today and I'm, like, you had what? Evidently he had gone to the class and talked to the guys and he sat them down and said you**

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[4]Discourse about the "average Albertan" later shifts to "normal" and "severely normal." The later seems to stand for Fundamentalist Christians like *AR's* Byfield family.

know this is discrimination and things like that. And I thought, oh great, thanks. To me that intensified the situation. (Jack, 1998)

Special Treatment for Winning Albertans: k.d. lang

It should be clear by now that the *AR* was not writing in a cultural or political vacuum but had widespread support from within the elected government. As noted throughout the previous sections, statements and actions by provincially elected politicians functioned side by side with the *AR* in the production of homophobic and heterosexist discourse. Even if individual Albertans did not subscribe to or read the numerous free copies of *AR* that were in circulation, it would be difficult to ignore homophobic statements and actions of politicians as these were reported in mainstream radio, televisions and print media.

Once he did that talk on discrimination I thought forget it. I'm not going back. That's like me walking right into a line of fire..like its aimed at me, you know, discrimination. Well they would think he's not Black, he's not Hispanic, he speaks perfectly good English, what's there to discriminate against? Is it, he must be gay. (Jack, 1998)

One such occasion occurred in the midst of the gay rights as special rights skirmish. In January, 1993 national attention was on k. d. lang, an Albertan from Consort, who had won numerous previous music awards but again was recipient of a Canadian music award. When Albertans, like lang, gain widespread recognition for outstanding achievements or performances, the Alberta government honours them by citing their name and sending a message of congratulations on behalf of all Albertans.

I like makeup too. I wear nail polish too. I have to use nail polish remover because I have an educational assistant who doesn't want me to wear nail polish and I'm supposed to take it off at school because its not appropriate in school. The girls get to wear it and I think this isn't fair. They tolerate me because I am their best student. (Oscar, 1998)

Lang, however, was not to be lauded in the manner that other Albertans could expect. She was given different treatment, some might argue special treatment even though the Alberta government was openly anti-special treatment for homosexuals. Rather than honour lang, the government refused. Depending on which politician one talked to, reasons for the refusal varied. One reason was because lang was a lesbian. Another reason was that vegetarian lang had made an advertisement "meat stinks" several

years earlier that had riled the cattle ranchers of Alberta. Premier Ralph Klein stated that his refusal to honour lang was related to her anti-beef campaign. Other members were more forthcoming about their reasons. Tory backbencher, Ernie Islay, stated that he would not support sending a message of congratulations because lang had openly declared she was a lesbian.

New Democrat William Roberts tried to introduce a motion to send lang congratulations but unanimous consent was required, and significantly this was not forthcoming from many members of the Klein government. In March, 1993 lang won a third Grammy Award and finally the Klein government sent a letter of congratulations to her. "Klein said he hoped the gesture would make up for the bad press the province received when the legislature refused to honour lang in January" (Panzeri, 1993, p. A1).

The unwillingness of elected politicians to acknowledge openly queer Albertans for outstanding achievement, as one of our own, made it clear that queer Albertans and their achievements were not worthy of congratulations. The message produced was that queer Albertans were not really Albertans and would be best living somewhere else, perhaps the Sodom of the west, Vancouver. Maintaining that queers are defined by sexuality and sex only, means that any other feature must be ignored so that, even when queer people stand out in ways recognized in the mainstream as important, they are marginalized. This message, for queer and questioning youth, no doubt had a powerful and silencing effect. If k. d. lang was marginal then they were likely even more so.

Like junior high was, like I hated junior high. Like I hated many of my school years, in fact. (Jack, 1998)

Mirosh was praised by the *AR* for her invocation that gays and lesbians did not deserve special anything and yet special treatment is exactly what the Klein government meted out to lang. Maintaining homophobic policies which catered to the special interests of minority religious groups, required that politicians flip flop on what they understood by special treatment.

Significantly, the *AR* did give lang due respect for her accomplishments and reported her awards (February 8, 1993; March 8, 1993) as well as commenting on her "virtuoso singing voice" (Albertans, July 26, 1993). In a later edition, however, the *AR* commented that "you could not help but feel that the singer was using her prodigious talent and fame to mess with youth, impressionable minds" (Bunner, August 26, 1996). Again, queer people are represented as predatory homosexuals while youth are assumed as heterosexual and easily impressed.

Boys' schools have a very different atmosphere...there's a lot of joking around, there is not a lot of seriousness...also there is a lot of sex, sexual contact...that is, you're not officially gay in that manner. (Oscar, 1998)

Of chemicals and sex: Can pollutants cause promiscuity and

homosexuality? (*Alberta Report*, February 1, 1993, p. 16)

Away we go down the next slippery slope—guard your children. (Byfield, February 15, 1993, p.2)

The radical agenda gains acceptance: Sex with 12-years-olds isn't necessarily harmful, says the Grey Nuns head psychiatrist. (Demers, February 15, 1993, pp. 28-29)

'Rage against the dying light': Western evangelicals mobilize against gay rights. (White, February 19, 1993, p. 37)

The gay sore erupts again: As the UC agonizes, a cleric appears in full frontal glory. (White, March 15, 1993, pp. 36-37)

Gays are the worst victims of their own propaganda. (*AR*, March 15, 1993, pp.40-41)

Helping kids become gay: A medical conference in Edmonton promotes teen homosexuality. (Demers, May 10, 1993, p. 40)

Repudiating the special rights lobbyists. (Woodard, June 21, 1993, p. 3)

Of course there can be a 'gay theology,' also a pedophile or a con man's theology. (Byfield, July 5, 1993, p. 40)

Nov. 27, 1993 - Vriend takes his case to the Court of Queen's Bench.

April 13, 1994 -Justice Anne Russell rules Alberta's human rights law is inconsistent with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the act must include sexual orientation.

May 5, 1994 - Alberta government decides to appeal Vriend.

Feb. 23, 1996 - Court of Appeal Alberta rules in favour of the government in a decision by Justice John McClung.

March 6, 1996 -Vriend decides to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada which agrees to hear case.

My mum died on May 24, 1995. I was in shock. It was like my world crashed right there in front of me. My mum truly loved me, she was the only one who really cared about me. When she was alive, I used to lie. I used to cheat and I used to hurt people a lot. But after she died, it was like a whole new person emerged. Not even a month later, her sister, my aunt, the one she was closest with...passed on. Like that just cost me my sanity. So I just kinda went bonkers for a bit. I was thrown into a secure treatment and stuff..basically a mental institution and I don't agree with that programme. Even if you aren't insane they throw you in there and that's where you crack. That is where you lose your sanity. (Michel, 1998)

In 1993, 1994, and 1995 there was a continuous onslaught of articles on human rights for lesbians and gays in the *AR*.[5] The case of Delwin Vriend made its way through various levels of the legal system. The federal Tories had fallen from power, along with their proposed changes for inclusion of sexual orientation as a protected category in the CHRA, and Chretien's Liberals were in charge of the Canadian state. Within this frame, the *AR* marshalled a different argument in its war on 'homosexuality' and flagging readership. In a story titled "Special rights for sodomites", reporter Champion wrote that "Canada's human rights czar makes a last plea to legitimize the homosexual lifestyle" (April 8, 1996, p. 25). This article was partially in response to the last annual report produced by Human Rights Chief Commissioner, Max Yalden, before his retirement. Yalden found that Ottawa was complicit in widespread intolerance towards lesbians and gays for failing to add sexual orientation to the CHRA. Further, Yalden roundly condemned critics for stating that inclusion of sexual orientation amounted to special rights.

Because I really believe that there are people out there who really believe that if everyone is equal then we don't need that special sort of clause in there. But really they are just deluding themselves because it is not going to take over night for people to change, but we have to start somewhere, right? And starting somewhere is gonna be having that little phrase that says sexual orientation. (Virginia, 1998)

The response of Alberta's Community Development Minister, Gary Mar, to the Yalden report provoked a new and immediate skirmish with the *AR*. Mar stated that "its's interesting that when blacks were marching in Alabama in the 1950s, people would hold

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[5] I reviewed each issue of the *AR* from January, 1992 to the end of December, 1999 and found that every issue had at least three of articles, letters, editorials, petitions, advertisements, or a special section on "fighting back". Without their homosexual coverage, the *AR* would have had a much smaller weekly offering.

up signs saying 'no special rights for blacks'" (Champion, April 8, 1996, p. 25). The *AR* charged Mar with confusing discrimination against Blacks in a different historical context in the USA to the contemporary Canadian refusal to endorse legislative protection for homosexual practices. Again, the *AR* equated human rights protection as an endorsement of homosexual practices when human rights protection is about job security and apartments, that is inclusion and accommodation ideals (MacDougall, 2000, p.106). Simultaneously, the *AR* offered statistical evidence from an unnamed source that gays have higher average incomes and educational levels. Statistics regarding lesbians were missing from this information.

> **And I think, I used to think it was fear. But now I just think that it is blatant ignorance, because they don't know what they are afraid of. They can't even identify something to be afraid of. It's not even coming out of hatred or 'I know what I am hating.' It's that they have no clue. There's no, it is total ignorance. (Virginia, 1998)**

The *AR* also argued that the Black rights are not analogous to rights for 'homosexuals' because, Blacks do not have a choice regarding skin colour, while gays and lesbians do have a choice about taking up the 'homosexual lifestyle'. To shore up their argument, the *AR* interviewed Dean William Allen of James Madison College in Lansing, Michigan, a Black man, who also disagreed with Mar's analogy between Blacks and homosexuals.

> For all important social purposes...homosexuals are a "trans-social category"–belonging to all classes and walks of life, and not readily identifiable unless they choose to advertise their proclivities... and they [Blacks and homosexuals] are in no way comparable, and there is no justification for using such as [sic] analogy to advance the homosexual cause. (Champion, April 8, 1996, p. 25)

Choice operates in two ways in relation to homosexuality in the *AR* special features of April 9, 1996. First, the *AR* relies on 'research' and includes special stories on reparative therapy in which gays and lesbians choose to be treated and restored to a happy heterosexual existence complete with a traditional family of their own (April 19, 1993, pp. 30-31). Choice is used as well, to point out that homosexuals make themselves public only by announcing their "proclivities". Homosexuals choose to be out when they could otherwise be unnoticed.

> **My choice to be so out, so loud was like a personal thing. So I think if the safety plan had been there I would have been more out. Because someone somewhere said it was legitimate and valued it [lesbian or gay] and valued me. I was loud and I was**

like, you're going to accept me. So that when I got my ribs broken, when my friends were spit on, or those kinds of things, there would have been a legitimate law against that stuff. (Virginia, 1998)

Heterosexuality, of course, does not need to announce itself publicly as heterosexuality is the default position.

There was this teacher there and she was a lesbian. She was really awesome to be around and stuff. She taught me not to pass judgement on people because of their orientation and stuff. I would see her around here and there and she is really cool. I respect her. (Michel, 1998)

Meanwhile, the *AR* reported federal Liberal back bencher MP Tom Wappell warning that "'it is not an end, but the beginning of a quest to have homosexual behaviour treated as the absolute equivalent'of normal heterosexual relations" (Champion, 1996, p. 25). The inability to acknowledge the historical use of "special rights" arguments elsewhere to deny protection against discrimination is in keeping with the *AR*'s mission to boost sales while simultaneously becoming more gutsy and less dull. The sensationalised reporting is just one of the *AR*'s strategies against queer Albertans. A rash of letter writing ensued over the next few months in response to this latest volley in the war waged by the *AR* against homosexuality in Alberta.

Prepare for ramming: Chretien will push gay marriage rights through in one week. (McFeely, May 6, 1996, p. 8)

The skater-boy who wasn't: A lesbian in drag seduces five young girls. (Sheremeta, May 6, 1996, p. 25)

Homos at twelve o'clock! An alderman wants to buzz trysting gays with a police chopper. (Sillars, May 6, 1996, p. 40)

Rock's gay bill: What thou doest, do quickly. (Jenkinson May 13, 1996, p. 8)

The beating reform was doomed to suffer: Manning learns there is no such thing as a populist position on human rights. (Jenkinson, May 20, 1996, pp. 6-8)

A forced march toward chaos: Critics assail Manning's refusal to accept that many forms of discrimination are essential and good. (McFeely, May 20, 1996, pp. 9-11)

What exactly was it that gained for sodomy such a fine reputation? (Byfield, T., 1996, May 20, p. 44)

Mr. Manning's evasive ideas about 'rights' are worse than Mr. Rock's. (Byfield, L., 1996, May 27, 1996, p. 2)

The mask comes off: With gay rights in the bag, homosexuals plot their next move. (Verburg, May 27, 1996, p. 8)

Queering gropes for the moral high ground. (McGovern, May 27, 1996, (pp. 34-35)

The Dirty Politics of Homosexual Health (Verburg, June 3, 1996, p. 36)

And you know, after I am bleeding, after I have my stitches, after my broken ribs mend and I am sitting somewhere, anywhere.....I am still gay. No one has gotten rid of me. You can't physically brutalize someone, or terrorize someone to change what they are. You have to change your own ignorance. You have to learn, you have to be educated. (Virginia, 1998)

In the midst of advocating the extermination of all gophers in the province (May 6, 1996), the *AR* staff sensed that another of their special exposés of homosexuality was in order. Several years had passed since the last report and the cause was taking a further battering from one many thought of as their own, Reform Leader Preston Manning. Manning's position on human rights was to remove all protected categories and legislate instead that all discrimination was illegal. The administration of the law would be left to existing human rights commissions and commissioners, another group of people the *AR* found reprehensible.

Last year I left the group home because they were so awful to me. I spent a month on the streets or staying with friends because my social worker would not help. He thought I had made a bad decision. For August, I shared an apartment with this other young woman in care and she had her boyfriend over all the time and all they did was fuck all the time. I got so stressed out I had a severe asthma attack and went into the hospital last September. (Michel [age 15], 1998)

Drawing on the expertness of twenty-four year veteran medical doctor, Grant Hill, who was also a Reform MP, the special report on homosexuals hit the stands in June 1996. The article introduced Hill's credentials: married, father of seven, a former graduate of the University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine with first-hand experience "treating

hundreds of people for sexually transmitted diseases, including many homosexual men" (Verburg, June 3, 1996, p. 36). Hill advised the *AR* that during his tenure as a medical doctor "he formed a 'vivid impression' that the homosexual lifestyle is unhealthy" (Verburg, 1996, p. 36).

> **Parents influence their children. Number one. So their children go to school and all of a sudden a boy doesn't want to play sports or a girl doesn't want to have tea time or wear a dress and it's immediate. It is an immediate reaction. There is no thinking. Kids are cruel but they got this from their parents. Kids sound cruelest because they don't have lots of comprehension of what they are saying. But adults do know what they are saying and that is where kids get it from in the first place. (Virginia, 1998)**

Dr. Hill, according to this article, made the mistake of stating publicly in the House of Commons two days prior to third reading of Bill C-33 which was to amend the CHRA, what, he claimed, most physicians know and what numerous medical studies have established conclusively (Verburg, June 3, 1996). The evidence provided by Hill to the *AR*, along with his personal experiences, relied on *one* medical study about the increase of hepatitis A in homosexual populations. The *AR* drew further on studies from 1992, 1993, and 1994 in relation to HIV/AIDS infections and these were used to 'prove' that HIV/AIDs is a gay male disease related to "promiscuity...endemic to homosexual behaviour" (Verburg, June 3, 1996, p. 37). Information provided elsewhere in the article came from Paul Cameron's Family Research Institute.

> Gays have been known to engage in other unhealthy activities, such as inserting "toys" like bottles, flashlights and even gerbils into the rectum, "golden showers" (drinking or being splashed with urine) and eating and wallowing in feces. (Verburg, June 3, 1996, p. 36)

> **Nothing is ever said. The showers [in private, christian boys school] were sort of....don't linger too long, wash your hair, soap down, get out. If you stayed any more than seven minutes you were a faggot, it was pretty concrete in that manner. But there was time for quick stuff. (Oscar , 1998)**

It is worth noting that Cameron was expelled from the American Psychological Association in 1983. He had been censured by other bodies like the American Sociological Association, American Psychiatric Association and by a judge for making misrepresentations about homosexuals in court. The work put out by Cameron's Family Research Institute is organized and disseminated primarily by one man, Paul Cameron.

Yet, the *AR* relies on Cameron and his work over and over again in their war on homosexuality.[6]

> **Those people who are picked on in grade three, those people who continually get it and get it and get it. It is that whole thing of, everybody has an emotional shield, and that everything that is said to you throughout your growing up years rips at that shield. And either you are able to repair it or you are not. And slowly, slowly, your self-esteem turns into this non-existent little thing and you are lucky if you can get out of bed in the morning. You know it happens to people who are overweight. It happens to people who are depressed. It happens to lots of kids who are queer. (Virginia, 1998)**

Elsewhere an extensive and sensationalised accounting of anal intercourse as "a mixing bowl of semen, germs or infections on the penis" is juxtaposed to "normal sex" in which a more sanitized, medicalized language is used to describe that "the multi-layered and more flexible vaginal wall keeps viruses from entering the blood stream" (Verburg, June 3, 1996, p. 36). A bar graph was included in which the bars were signified by tomb stones designating lifestyle and lifespans. According to this graph, married males live to seventy-four years; divorced and single males live to age fifty-seven; while homosexual males die at forty-two and those with AIDS die on the average at thirty-nine years. These statistics were provided courtesy of Cameron's Family Research Institute. Married, divorced, and single males were not identified as heterosexual. Their heterosexuality was presumed and required no label on the tombstone to be understood.

> **As soon as I sat down at my desk, kids were like throwing pencils. They were throwing them at me and saying fucking homo faggot. This was in CALM [Career and Life Management]. (Michel, 1998)**

Not only did the *AR* discredit the Kinsey Report (1948) with its estimate that ten per cent of the population is homosexual, the numbers employed by the *AR* varied to support whatever argument they proposed. Even though the *AR* thought the numbers of homosexuals to be very small, they were still a significant horde or group of social deviants with enormous power and engaged in horrible sins and crimes. It was difficult enough contemplating individual homosexual deviants without having to contend with a group who had legally gained group status. The *AR* focussed on gay male sex in their efforts to pathologize homosexuality, yet they also wanted to deny lesbians human rights protection based on an "unhealthy lifestyle". Both gay men and lesbians, however, were

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[6]See *Background Material on Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Issues Report* from the Calgary Board of Education, June 11, 1996 in which they note that his work has been extensively discredited.

AR with death because of their apparent inability to reproduce and therefore "cheat" death.

In the same issue, a special report on "Dirty politics" reiterated the *AR* worldview that married heterosexuality and what the *AR* regards as family values were under attack from deviant humans. Sin and punishment figure strongly in two further columns as the backdrop to the "Dirty politics" article, "Further degradation of our society" (Manderville, June 3, 1996, p. 3) and in the linkage drawn between abortion and breast cancer ("Did you know...?", June 3, 1996, p. 44).

Given this barrage of representations of homosexuality, what parent, in the absence of any positive representation or knowledge of queer peoples, would be happy at the idea of a queer offspring? Queer and questioning youth, bear the weightiness of this weekly onslaught, delivered to their 'safe and caring' schools, ubiquitous on shelves and table tops and accessible to those around them.

> **I am so lucky and so privileged in the sort of life I have led. I have had some shitty things happen to me, but throughout it all, I had people around me who made a big difference. And I managed to be here right now talking to you. But I look at all those people who had their bones broken, who were spat on, pushed, shoved, kicked out of home and they retreated. They retreated into themselves and tried real hard to fit in. They just accept because they have no one to support them. No one to validate that what they are feeling is okay, it's alright, it's not their fault and there is nothing wrong with them. They have no other choice but to retreat into themselves. (Virginia, 1998)**

The Ugly Canadian: Ottawa's delegation to a UN conference preaches an extreme anti-family crusade that enrages the Third World. (*Alberta Report*, July 1, 1996, Cover)

Canadians go home: At UN conference in Turkey, Ottawa's strident homo-feminist agenda provokes an angry counter-attack from the Third World. (McFeely, July 1, 1996, pp. 28-33)

The treason of the clerics: Gay apostasy subverts and paralyzes the Canadian Catholic Church. (Woodard, July 8, 1996, pp. 28-31)

See no evil: Canada's somnolent Catholic bishops capitulate on gay rights to cover up a same-sex spousal benefits deal with the victims of their homosexual priests. (*AR* Cover, July 8, 1996)

The natural family is alive and threatened: Statscan fires another numbers barrage to screen the advance of gay rights. (July 8, 1996, p. 37)

Homosex for the masses: The showcase channel airs a celebration of gay porn. (Anderson, July 15, 1996, p. 29)

The Mouse Trap: A backlash brews against Disney's sugar-coated revisionism and omnipotent cultural power. (*AR* Cover, July 22, 1996)

Maybe they don't want a cure: Ugly AIDS conference protests overshadow reports of progress. (Sheremeta, July 22, 1996, pp. 30-32)

Intensifications: The Calgary Board of Education

Unsurprisingly to the *AR*, feminists were busy assaulting the natural family at United Nations' conferences and even Disney and the Catholic Church were implicated as pro-gay in the *AR* battle against queer Albertans. Disney had become a huge threat with its extension of spousal benefits to homosexual employees such that "the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in June, 13,000 delegates representing some 16 million members voted to threaten a boycott against Disney for 'promoting homosexuality'" (Verburg, July 22, 1996, p. 26). The Catholic Church, unlike the Baptists or the church of the Byfields, had permitted a cover up of homosexuality that was rampant in their flock (July 8, 1996). But, according to the *AR*, the sinister threat of homosexuality was poised to strike closer to home in Alberta as the gay agenda prepared to hit Alberta schools.

> **It is very, very hard to go against the grain when you are small. When you don't have any power and you have no voice. Having the school board put into place a safety plan helps. You know that we are going to institute a new policy and you cannot say this kind of thing, that you can't discriminate because of sexual orientation in the schools, that is part of it. It will not make everything better because there is no reinforcement but it is a step in the right direction. (Virginia, 1998)**

On June 11, 1996 the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) heard a Report on Counselling Support for Homosexual Youth Safety and adopted a series of motions towards developing an information package for safety of sexual minority youth in their school district. Pat Boyle, Advisor on Gender Issues for CBE was part of a committee that developed an Action Plan for consideration by Superintendents's Council. It is worth quoting the recommendations adopted by CBE, in principle, at the September meeting because they contrasted so starkly with the wasteland of positive initiatives for queer

youth in Alberta schools. The willingness of CBE to include all staff, in particular teachers, was testimony to their interest in the well-being of all their constituent members and goes beyond Alberta Teacher Association initiatives in the new millennium.

> a) An Advisory Group to be established to assist the Advisor on Gender Issues with further planning and the implementation of the following actions. The Advisory Group to include representation from schools, departments, Calgary Health Services and Calgary Police Services (SRO Unit).
> b) The professional Resource Centre to put together a Staff Resource Package that will include several articles on the safety needs of gay/lesbian youth. The Professional Resource Centre will also continue to make this matter part of its collection development.
> c) The Video Loan Pool to look into purchasing video material on this matter.
> d) The Evaluation/Selection Group of Research and System Development to evaluate material, non-fiction and fiction, for suitability in school libraries.
> e) Workshops on homophobia and homosexuality to be held for Principals, Assistant Principals, Counselors, CALM Teachers, and other Teaching Staff.
> f) Harassment workshops will include information about the safety and well-being of gay/lesbian students and staff.
> g) The Advisor on Gender Issues will attend meetings of the Calgary Police Service's Gay and Lesbian Community Police Liaison Committee. The Calgary Police Service will be providing workshops on homophobia and homosexuality for all School Resource Officers in the next year.
> h) The Advisor on Gender Issues will conduct a workshop on gay/lesbian youth at Teachers' Convention in February, 1997.
> i) Gender Attitude and Achievement Promotion (GAAP) will have a session on gay/lesbian youth issues in December, 1996 for junior high teachers who are interested in gender issues.

The backlash which ensued effectively placed the Action Plan in a defensive position in which every action and purchase in support of lesbian and gay youth came under intense public scrutiny.

The CBE initiated an action plan when others had not because of the political make-up of the board. The CBE was the largest board in the province and one that was often embroiled in controversy with the provincial government. Unlike CBE, controversial issues did not figure in the Edmonton Public School Board's plans, even though that city was considered the holdout against the Progressive Conservative domination in Alberta (Ruttan, May 10, 1997, p. H2). Individual members of the CBE had "snatched victory from a right-leaning slate of candidates who wanted to take over the

board" (Mitchell, March 7, 1997, A2). It is significant to what transpired that this savvy and progressive board had a contingent of strong women members.

> **I quit school last March because of the homophobic harassment at my high school. No one at the school took me seriously and the teacher tried to claim I had shoved him when I escaped from the class. Even though we had a plan [safety action plan] in our school area, see this lady from the central office came out to the school, I had to quit because my school wouldn't do anything. (Michel, 1998)**

The fight against inadequate funding of schools, growing provincial control, and social justice issues were led by the CBE. According to the *Edmonton Journal's* Ruttan, "the Klein government hates the Calgary Board of Education. It is the epitome of everything the government wants to stamp out–rebellious, female-dominated, liberal, big-spending" (May 10, 1997, p. H2). The CBE, lead by Chair Jennifer Pollock and supported by all other Board members as well as Deputy Superintendent Donna Michael, were willing to look at social justice issues.

> **Because Alberta, the people here you know aren't that bad. They're mostly pretty decent. It is kind of sad when you see them lagging behind like this. My friends are really great and really support me and who I am. They prove that not everyone in Alberta is homophobic. And all my friends are straight but care about me and who I am as gay. (Svend, 1998)**

The CBE led the country with initiatives like appointing "gender equity officer", Pat Boyle. School boards across Canada relied on Boyle as a consultant and a considerable part of her two-thirds position was spent assisting other Boards. Boyle did an incredible amount of work, thoroughly researched, over a two year period leading up to the February 25, 1997 meeting to prepare the Board for all the issues involved in the Action Plan. This included having queer youth, parents and adults including community leaders, come and talk about their lives. Through Boyle, the CBE knew that discussions about queer lives needed to include queer people not those who hated them, an idea that was unintelligible to the *AR*. In addition, Boyle had the Board spend time addressing the possibility of a backlash from organized religious fundamentalists. As Boyle reported later, neither herself or the Board had begun to imagine the viciousness of the backlash (Boyle, May 14, 1997).

The February 25, 1997 meeting was the showdown for final approval of the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Action Plan on Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Youth and Staff Safety. Calling this meeting a showdown cannot begin to capture the cacophony of events leading up to and the shrill tone of this meeting. In their "Fighting Back" column, for example, the *AR* lent support to the resistance to the Action Plan with the following

call:

> February 12 All concerned Calgary Public School Board parents and taxpayers are asked to attend a public meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Calgary Convention Centre, Macleod Salon D- 120 - 9 Avenue SE. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the school board's Action Plan to adopt a policy on "Homosexual Youth Safety." The board has had very little input from parents regarding this policy (see story, page 32). Come and be informed of the effects and ramifications, and give your input. Call 403-288-5332 or 403-239-8765 for further information. (February 10, 1997, p. 39).

Gatherings throughout the city were organized by churches affiliated with the *AR*. At these meetings, parents were provided with testimonials from a "recovering homosexual" with graphic details of his deadly gay sexual practices, generalized to all other homosexuals along with the message that if he could beat such a depraved lifestyle so could anyone. Other information about the depravity of homosexuality was made available as well. Parents and other concerned types were warned to attend the February Board meeting and make their voices heard, or else the gay agenda would take over their schools, recruiting or preying on their children.

> **Well, Albertans are made up of many different communities, and there is no one type of Albertan. And when you look at the population as a whole you can see that it is not likely going to have a huge backlash against rights except from a very small, small and vocal yes but still a small group of people that don't represent what the people in the province want. (Svend, 1998)**

> In late August, over 100 Christians from 16 churches met at the Centre Street Church in Calgary, to discuss a recent public school board resolution to legitimize homosexuality in the curriculum. These parents decided to form a Calgary chapter of Citizens United for Responsible Education (CURE), a Toronto-based network founded in 1992. (Woodard, September 16, 1996, p. 32)

Reading the minutes for the "regular meeting of the Board" renders the chaotic and acrimonious struggle that ensued into a dry sounding event, something it most definitely was not (Boyle, 1997, personal communication). The meeting was packed by concerned citizens with police attendance if things got completely out of hand. Mitchell wrote for the *Globe and Mail* that "by all accounts, it was a noisy meeting" (March 7, 1997, p. A2). Shouting and screaming made it difficult for the Board to proceed with business. In spite of the resistance, the motion to adopt the Action Plan passed unanimously.

In the weeks that followed, attempts to intimidate Board members and staff required that all visitors pass into the CBE building through a security point. I was one

such visitor. Boyle was particularly singled out because she was a "gender consultant" and therefore an automatic enemy (CURE'S founder Butler quoted in Woodard, September 16, 1996, p. 32). Phone calls to the CBE and especially Boyle were screened because of the numbers of hate calls received. Boyle reported that friends of hers who attended meetings in the Calgary area organized by opponents said she was vilified so completely that her friends were aghast at what was claimed about her and worried about her safety and well-being. Similar verbal attacks were made against other CBE members during meetings by religious fundamentalists. The *AR* assisted the cause by reproducing an excerpt made to the CBE on September 14, 1996 by concerned parent and medical doctor Dr. L. Macphail, listing the deadliness of 'the lifestyle', thus adding a further fright factor to CURE's resistances to the action plan (Macphail, October 14, 1996, p. 33).

> **The school [private, Christian fundamentalist boy's school] was very patriarchal, a very aggressive, bullying kind of heterosexual masculinity. The kids at the bottom were the most feminine and they were lesser than the faggots who weren't really citizens either. There was a hierarchy that was, well, about people who weren't classified as citizens, people that were outcasts, ostracized, just didn't fit into the power structure. (Oscar, 1998)**

Fear of the queer predator taking innocent children and youth was turned into a fear of the predator state, operating in the interests of a powerful homosexual lobby. The provision of a safety action plan which would also include counselling for queer youth produced both a tacit recognition that queer youth might be in their midst and fears that the state was taking children from their parents. Organizing against state education was thus marshalled in this latest battle against homosexuality (Woodard, October 14, 1996, p. 32). Crites, head of Parents'Choice Association opined, "whose kids are they anyway? We know what's best for our kids" (Mitchell, March 7, 1997, p. A2).

> **My mum and dad split up because my dad was so hard on me and my brother. He would beat us up for goofy things that he thought were bad, like spilling something. We are both adopted. My mum couldn't take it anymore. Last time I saw my Dad, I got so angry, I yelled at him that I was a fag and now he is lots more respectful. (Michel, 1998)**

The ownership of other human beings, especially children or youth, was central to these adult narratives that masqueraded as a family values.

> **I don't know why they sent me to that school. My mum though it would be a good idea and so did my grandparents. It (Christian, fundamentalist private boy's school) still has a good reputation. A bunch of us that were there when I went are in the family**

[gay]. (Oscar, 1998)

The notion that children and youth may have a sexual identity and the possibility that traditional families have queer family members could not be countenanced by Parents for Choice. Concerned parents were represented as those who resisted the Action Plan and managed the sexuality of their offspring through intimidation, psychotherapy, and ostracism. Those, especially feminists, who supported queer rights were by definition anti-family. The vilification of feminism by way of the CBE and its contingent of strong women was consistent with fundamentalist religious values of father-headed traditional families with women as homemakers and both women and children as submissive to patriarchal control.

> **It is that whole mentality that is not going to change. And is not going to change as long as we have leaders who aren't in touch. (Virginia, 1998)**

Whereas the *AR* cast the struggle over the Action Plan as an issue about 'homosexual' content in the curriculum, the Action plan was based on tenets of the *Canadian Charter of Rights* and *Human Rights Act*. Both the *Charter* and *Human Rights Act* are concerned with obligations of public institutions like schools to all their constituent members, including queer youth and teachers. As Boyle stated "we have a legal obligation to make sure students are safe in our schools" (Mitchell, March 7, 1997, p. A2). Yet pressure on the CBE continued long after the plan had passed, making change difficult if not, at times, impossible. For example, with the inclusion of lesbian and gay materials into libraries came a call for book banning by Tom Crites and his group, a call agreed to by school board Chief Superintendent Donna Michaels (Mitchell & Laghi, November 20, 1997, p. A1).

> **Pat Boyle kept making suggestions and they said they couldn't do some but would do other things if anything else happened. The school just didn't care, or they were stupid, or they were afraid of getting into trouble from parents and stuff. Well, a few days later, the same thing happened in CALM class and so I said fuck it and I was out of there. Teachers said why are you leaving, you are doing so well academically and I said I can't handle the shit and no one will do anything. And also my safety is an issue so I'm going home. (Michel, 1998)**

G is for gay–and gullible: Calgary Public believes 13% of its students may be homosexual. (Woodard, July 1, 1996, pp. 34-35)

Equality, but not if it costs: A well-to-do lesbian refuses to pay

support to her rejected ex-lover. (Champion, August 26, 1996)

Condom education is not sex education: Saskatchewan decides there will be mandatory copulation instruction after all. (Parker, July 1, 1996, pp. 34-35)

The Protestants tackle another reformation: Calgary evangelicals gather against the advance of the gay curriculum. (Woodard, September 16, 1996, p. 32)

Back into the bedrooms of the nation: As the world recoils from pedophilia, the UN gay lobby stops opposing it. (*AR*, September 16, 1996, p. 35)

Who should pay for self-inflicted ailments? As demands grow for free AIDS treatment Klein muses about personal responsibility for sickness. (*AR*, September 23, 1996, p. 11)

Fatal fear of the gay lobby: Testimony in a Toronto lawsuit may complete Krever's obstructed inquiry into Red Cross blood contamination. (*AR*, September 23, 1996, pp. 23-24)

One not-so gay CBC employee: Mothercorp is sued for withholding pension benefits. (Champion, September 23, 1996, p. 24)

The pedophile charge that stunned B.C.: Few parents knew about the other life of their popular gay school principal. (Brunet, September 23, 1996, p. 28)

Chris P. Carrot comes to Alberta: The animal rights mascot finds little sympathy in cattle country. (Champion, September 30, 1996, p. 19)

How feminists dominate the courts: When they mount Charter challenges, they usually win. (Champion, September 30, 1996, pp. 24-25)

Fast-track to discrimination: Young female judges seek better compensation than male benchers. (Champion, September 30, 1996, pp. 24-25)

Deconstructing the arts faculty: Doctrinaire feminism tightens its grasp on the U of A's biggest department. (Verburg, September 30,

1996, pp. 32-37)

The devil in disguise: Angels in America. (*AR*, October 7, 1996, p. 1)

The other victims of the U of A's deconstructionists: teachers. (Craig, October 7, 1996)

Now they're the school's children: Calgary parents are stonewalled on unmonitored homosexual counselling. (Woodard, October 14, 1996, p. 32)

The adverse health effects of homosexuality should be taught. (Macphail, October 14, 1996, p. 33)

Keep those redneck moms and dads in the dark: Calgary's public school board wants the right to send teens to gay activists for counselling. (Sillars, February 10, 1997, p. 32)

School trustees create storm over gay rights. (Mitchell, March 7, 1997, p. A2)

Gays get in the door: Calgary Public proceeds with its acceptance promotion. (March 17, 1997, p. 30)

Parents learn to fight the gay agenda: B.C.'s battle against anti-family propaganda gains momentum. (Collins, May 5, 1997, pp. 34-35)

Books banned after 'gay agenda' complaints: Move by Calgary Public School Board called part of the explosion of antihomosexual sentiment. (Mitchell & Laghi, November 20, 1997, p. A1 & A8)

Gay culture comes to Calgary public schools: The CBE ungraciously bans some sexually-explicit homosexual fiction. (Sillars, December 15, 1997, p. S8)

I never heard anything about gays or lesbians in school. In sex ed we got reproduction. We still live with an education in which reproduction is key still and so we don't talk about anything but safe hetero sex for when we become adults, as if. (Oscar, 1998)

Fembos, Devils, and Angels in Alberta

Feminists, animal rights activists, and environmentalists had become as exceptionally powerful as the "vociferous homosexual rights lobby" (Frey, December 21, 1992, p. 9). At least two feature-length articles in the *AR* were devoted to the takeover of the University of Alberta by radical postmodernist, deconstructionist feminists also known as power feminists (Verburg, September 30, 1996, pp. 32-37; Craig, October 7, 1996 pp.32-33). Professors were quoted decrying the demise of their profession and universities more generally due to power feminists who, for these academics, were linked to queer politics. According to retired professor Solomon, "a student can now graduate without taking courses which a decade ago were core subjects...you can take all your material in some very strange areas" (as quoted in Verburg, September 30, 1996). Elsewhere in the same article, the *AR* reported that

> . . . one English course on gender and sexuality is reportedly taught by a male professor who once came to class dressed like a woman. In fact, cross-dressing is a theme in a handful of courses. Other courses focus on curious issues such as "fatal women," "queer communities," "diseases of the blood," and "the liabilities of childbearing." Over 20 undergraduate and graduate courses in English deal with explicitly feminist and homosexual themes, with titles such as "Feminist Cultural Materialism," and "Post Modernism and Queer Praxis." A course on Chaucer explores how "queer theory" can help postmodern readers "engage with the 'tacitly unfinished' status of the inherited *pre*modern text." Observes one English professor: "We are now reputed as one of the leading schools in queer theory in North America." (Verburg, September 30, 1996, p. 34, emphasis in original)

Professors like self-appointed feminist-watcher, Morton of the University of Calgary, were quoted lamenting the powerful feminist lobby and the law (Champion, September 30, 1996, p. 24), while in yet another article young female judges were blamed for fast-tracking in a way that discriminates against their male colleagues (Champion, September 30, 1996, p. 24). In an article titled "'Especially' no white males", University of British Columbia professor, Resnick, claimed that hiring practices indicate to white males that, "we legally can't rule you out, but this is who we're interested in" (Hiebert, September 30, 1996, p. 34). Not only were feminists taking over, University of Alberta's Craig blamed feminists and other "post-modern ideologues" for the demise of good teaching (October 6, 1996, p. 32). No less than President and Vice Chancellor Roderick Fraser (October 21, 1996, p. 3) and Henry Marshall Tory Chair Isabel Grundy (October 28, 1996, p. 3) wrote in response to these articles thus making apparent that academic readership of the *AR* included others besides right-wing ideologues like Craig and Morton.

I think guys, I think men, adolescents, male adolescents are

much, much more, as adolescents, have been much more encultured to be homophobic. They have been more encultured to be more aggressive. (Oscar, 1998)

Yes it was very easy being friends with girls. I had a lot of female friends. My two closest friends now are female. I just felt much safer and more comfortable because, for some reason, girls are much more accepting than boys. Girls tend to mature faster, while boys often never even mature as adults. (Rudolf, 1998)

The attack on the traditional family was far reaching; from homosexual porn as art, to Disney and the Catholic Church, and now the universities. It was clear to the *AR* that a battle against western civilization itself was being waged.

> Collectively the feminists adhere to a "post-modern" ideology that rejects the intellectual and cultural heritage of Western civilization. (Verburg, September 20, 1996, p. 32).

Meanwhile, the powerful gay lobby was blamed for the tainted blood scandal of the Red Cross. According to the *AR*, senior administrators at the Red Cross were so afraid of this powerful group and their advocates that they made poor management decisions with deadly repercussions for their clients. Even though "no one really knows how many homosexuals there are" (Avram, November 25, 1996, p. 26), there were still enough and powerful enough to bring down the Canadian blood system.

As the *AR* wrote retrospectively in January 11, 1999, they targeted the homosexual agenda in the 1990s because they wanted gutsy reporting to boost flagging readership (Byfield, p. 18). Scape-goating an already vilified group and casting it as powerful and threatening was bound to create sensation and boost readership by feeding human angst over a quickly changing world.

Sure I want everybody to have the same jobs and same opportunities and I also want integration in the community at large, but I think that what happens is the ghetto is a safe place. The ghetto is, well I think of the ghetto as the place where a person is out to the gay community, absolutely unclosseted in the gay community and the minute he walks out of the gay community he's back into the closet. I think that is dangerous. I think we have to stay out of the ghetto, get out of the closet. (Oscar , 1998)

While the *AR* admonished queers to stay private, two lesbians were outed in a highly public way (Verburg, September 30, 1996, p 33) and a spectral figure, the

pedophile began to emerge as the preoccupation of the magazine. Within this widening theatre of war, the play *Angels in America* came to the province.

The cover of October 7, 1996 openly declared this war with the caption "Controversy rages over the arrival of a play that casts AIDS-afflicted homosexuals as martyrs in the war against Western civilization" juxtaposed with the words "Angels in Alberta" and a replica of the poster for the production in Calgary. In short, the *AR* thought *Angels* to be thoroughly disgusting.

> The devil in disguise: *Angels in America*, which opened in Alberta last month, is the most celebrated play of recent memory. In Alberta, however, it has been one of the most reviled. Its admirers see it as a moving depiction of the pain suffered by AIDS victims. But it has at its core a revolutionary hatred for restraint of any kind. While its critics demand an end to government sponsorship of such productions, others propose a more radical solution: empowering audiences to take back the theatres. (October 7, 1996, 1)

A flurry of editorials and articles appeared in Edmonton and Calgary spearheaded by *Calgary Herald's* Stockland. The *AR* indicated that Stockland accused *Angels* of "obscenity, anti-religious hatred, and of being a demonstration of the urgent need to overhaul the province's arts funding process" (Grace, October 7, 1996, p. 36). The *AR* also reported a survey conducted by another newspaper, the *Sun*, which surveyed Alberta MLAs for their opinions on *Angels in America* (Grace, October 7, 1996, p. 36). MLA's Lorne Taylor, Jon Havelock, Heather Forsyth, Judy Gordon and Ron Hierath called for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts to withdraw funding to Alberta Theatre Projects. The producer-director of *Angels* condemned those who were hyper-critical of a play they had not seen. Havelock reversed his opinion after seeing the play. Minister of Community Development, Shirley McLellan, in a statement from her office, "'[was] not inclined to set herself up as judge and jury" on any AFA funded project" (Grace, October 7, 1996, p. 37). While the review by reporter Grace was itself somewhat subdued, for *AR* standards writing on homosexuality, the theme of a war on western civilisation spread, gaining a new theatre: heaven.

> [*Angels*] is an artistic failure but it bears a powerful revolutionary message. While it elevates the belief current in the "AIDS community:" that victims of the disease are holy martyrs, homosexuals, and AIDS victims are only one division of Mr. Kushner's vaster army: one that seeks to destroy the very concepts of the law–on earth and in heaven. (Grace, October 7, 1996, p. 34)

In yet another article in the same edition, the Marquis de Sade, as well as "radical deconstructionist", Michel Foucault, and structuralist, Roland Barthes, were provided as evidence of the folly of multiculturalism. These multicultural intellectuals were

progenitors and therefore promoters of the "AIDS cult" in which the "object is to break down the moral barriers erected against perversity, not for the sake of the perverse, but to destroy the civilization those barriers protect" (Grace, October 7, 1996, p. 39). The link between multiculturalism and homosexuality was forged on the notion that traditional, Western, culture is under extreme threat from hordes of people who don't belong here. Deadly, infected, and contaminating homosexual bodies was the metaphor that tied all the threatening bodies together.

> **Like Roy Cohen has that speech in Angels in America, Part I. It's who I am, not who I sleep with or what I am not. I am not only who I sleep with or what I do in bed. (Virginia, 1998)**

In keeping with the theme of the demise and death of Western civilization, the following week the *AR* linked the "hipness" of baldness[7] as a "sign of aging, death, debilitation, illness" with homosexuality in "an instance of mass culture devouring 'alternative'" forbidden fruit" (Cover, *AR*, October 14, 1996; Cosh, October 14, 1996, pp. 26-29).[8] The bald head of "radical deconstructionist", Foucault, was pictured alongside the bald heads of other famous and less famous folk, all implicated with homosexuality and, in the slippery slope of the death of the traditional family, western civilization, law and order, and heaven.

> **And because I wore t-shirts and had the shaved head, the leather jacket, and the big boots and everything, the pins. I made sure I looked like what I thought was a hard core dyke. (Virginia, 1998)**

> **Comparing alcoholism and homosexuality: A Yale psychiatrist pursues an incendiary, but compassionate, analogy. (McGovern, November 11, 1996 (p. 40)**

> **Cursed by Wiccans: Two B. C. Christians say they are besieged by witches. (Skelly, November 11, 1996, pp. 42-43)**

> **A judge rewrites Alberta's marriage law: He decides the Legislature will give marital rights to unmarried couples. (Champion, November 18, 1996, pp. 28-29)**

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[7] Please do not be surprised if I come to my dissertation defence with a bald head. Vive la resistance! I want to be hip.

[8] The word fruit in this context reminds me of one of my high school years, at Queen Elizabeth Composite High School, Edmonton, in which I was warned not to wear green on Thursdays. Thursdays were "fruit days" and only fruits, that is homosexuals, wore green. If I could have escaped home and changed out of my green dress that Thursday so long ago, I would have. Now, I wear green on Thursdays.

They'd rather go to the bar: A Red Deer homosexual organization wilts from lack of interest. (Sheremeta, November 19, 1996, p. 36)

A monument to political correctness: Board members set aside their hurried approval of a Vancouver AIDS memorial. (Collins, November 25, 1996, p. 36)

The most deadly lifestyle: Roughly one in six male homosexuals has HIV or AIDS. (Avram, November 5, 1996, p. 26)

Grease for the squeakiest wheel: AIDS drugs get twice as many new dollars as cancer. (Champion, December 2, 1996, p. 11)

Freedom to spread disease: A B.C. court rules that transmitting HIV is not a crime. (Brunet, December 2, 1996, p. 29)

Men of their Word: Promise Keepers aim to 're-civilize' men--and salvage civilization. (O'Neill with Hiebert, December 2, 1996, pp. 36-37)

More bad news on single motherhood: A Statscan child health survey shows the strength of traditional families. (Woodard, December 9, 1996, p. 38-39)

Vancouver's depraved new world: The city plumbs new depths of prostitution, pornography, and perversion. (Brunet, March 10, 1997; pp. 16-19)

Diesel dykes and a devil worshipper named Louise: A key witness said the lady's week-long visit might have slipped his mind. (Sillars, March 17, 1997, pp. 24-25)

Abuse made me gay, now I have AIDS. (Champion, December 23, 1996, pp. 40-41)

Federal favours for 'queer culture': Minister Hedy Fry says homosexuals qualify for multicult grants. (Jenkinson, December 23, 1996, pp. 8-9)

The battle over gay sexuality: As scriptural belief dwindles, the Anglicans--and others--succumb to politics. (Woodard, December 30, 1996, pp. 32-33)

If you've got 'em, flaunt 'em: An estrogen-laden convict wants a taxpayer-

funded sex change. (Sillars, January 6, 1997, pp. 22-23)

Just whack 'em around–they love it: A teacher charges that schools are overtly hostile to young men. (Cosh, January 6, 1997, p. 41)

A costly and temporary fix for reckless sex: Though AIDS drug treatments are extending lives, the battle remains far from won (January 27, 1996, p. 33)

Manning goes recruiting in Vancouver: A gay magazine tries a little straight-baiting, but the Reform leader doesn't bite. (Power, February 3, 1997, p. 9)

Legislated male-bashing, Tory style: Alberta will copy Saskatchewan's prove-your-innocence domestic abuse law. (Sillars, February 3, 1997, p. 28)

A very Protestant defence: The Diocese of Nelson argues its pedophile priest worked for the laity. (February 3, 1997, p. 36)

What odd messages we'll hear from the *Globe*, if its editor's expectations come true. (Byfield, March 24, 1997, p. 44)

Sexy, sophisticated, or smutty?: Naked lesbian kissing is deemed acceptable for suppertime TV. (*AR*, April 28, 1997, p. 25)

Predatory Pedophiles Enter the War

While the homosexual agenda continued to assault western civilization, the heavens and traditional families, according to the *AR*, Promise Keepers, an organization of like-minded men were bringing salvation to the "rubble of a destroyed Western civilization" by "espousing a high-powered combination of Christianity, commitment to–and leadership of–wife and children, sexual purity, and fellowship with other men" (O'Neill with Hiebert, December 2, 1996, p. 36). Heterosexual masculinity would save the world in the way the *AR* wanted the world to be. Women, especially those unattached to men and with children, continued to be a large threat.

I miss my mother so much. She was killed in a car accident on May 24, 1995 and I heard about this over the radio....I was in a group home at that time and they didn't even tell me. She left my dad because he was so hard on me and my brother. (Michel, 1998)

AR writers had uncovered that single mothers, young ones especially, were devastating to traditional family values (Woodard, December 9, 1996, p. 38), while Aboriginal peoples were busy trying to get more than their fair share of land (Parker, December 9, 1996, p. 8). Ethnic minorities in Alberta who supported the right were on the rise. This was fine by the *AR*, because even though they weren't really Albertan, they were at least politically astute (Sillars, December 16, 1996, pp. 13-14). The *AR* discovered that the conspiracy against western men and boys was worse than "no white men need apply." More than any other social group, white males were bashed and lived in an overtly hostile world, created by radical, powerful and power-hungry feminists, linked, of course, to the strident homosexual lobby (Sillars, February 23, 1997, p. 28; Cosh, January 6, 1997, p. 41).

These assaults were manifest in phobias against a "triune male-referenced God" and worse, were also perpetrated by other males seduced by the feminist agenda, like United Church theologian Chris Levan of Edmonton. Male-bashing was also evidenced in domestic abuse legislation, which worked against fathers (Sillars, February 3, 1997, p. 28). Classrooms were hostile for males as well with "whacking around" as the most common discipline used against male students in kindergarten to grade twelve (Cosh, January 6, 1997, p. 41).

Lesbians in sport also constituted an attack on traditional heterosexual masculinity as these women had "characteristics traditionally taken as male: strength, speed, endurance and aggressiveness" (Sillars, January 20, 1997, p. 33). Another special feature exposing the assault on males included a cover with a butch-femme couple entwined in each others' arms and facing into the shadows, with the following headline: "From dyke to diva" lesbianism "has become a sexy and sophisticated refuge for women who have given up on men" (*AR*, May 12, 1997).

> **I know my earliest memories are like being two years old and going through my father beating the shit out of me. And already, making me a boy and making me want to be a boy. Boys were better, boys were stronger. And then when my parents divorced, I lived with my mother. By that time my mother had her head on straight and she did a lot of talking and told me I was a good person. She said I love you. That kind of stuff. (Virginia, 1998)**

Further evidence of the spread of male-bashing was found in popular culture, which gave television viewers the sitcom *Ellen*, starring a lesbian character played by lesbian actor, Ellen Degeneres (Woodard, May 12, 1997, p. 28). Meanwhile "sodomy was salubrious" for gay men because "celibate homos were shown to be five times likelier to attempt suicide than sexually active homos" and therefore "f---- as if your life depends on it" (Grace, January 27, 1997, p. 15). Strangely this *AR* imperative was the healthy response for all homosexuals, even lesbians.

> **I had a big crush on this boy in my class. And very shortly after when I first heard the word homosexual and learned what**

homosexuality was. I never knew exactly until I watched Roseanne in grade eight. I guess I've led a pretty sheltered life to not know what I was until so late. (Rudolf, 1998)

Other dangers loomed. Normal Christians were terrified by Witches on the Queen Charlotte Islands (Skelly, November 11, 1996, pp. 42-43) and devil-worshipping diesel dykes skulked in Calgary (Sillars, March 17, 1997, pp. 24-25). Most of the province had become unsafe, as had most of the country. Vancouver was a modern day Sodom and Gomorrah rife with "prostitution, pornography, and perversion" (Brunet, March 10, 1997, pp. 16-19), while right-thinking Lethbridge, Alberta, knew how to limit moral pollution of the sort that had taken over Vancouver (Sillars, March 10, 1997, p. 19). Vancouver MP, Svend Robinson, was especially vile for supporting the "normalizing of buggery" through the lowering of age of consent from age eighteen to fourteen (Woodard, March 17, 1997, p. 38), while even Preston Manning was "recruiting" in that same Sodom-like city (Power, February 3, 1997, p. 9), giving the religious right further pause in their support for him and the Alliance party. Orphans in Newfoundland had been abused by priests, making them gay and now they were further victimized because they had AIDs (Champion, December 23, 1996, p. 40), while protestant, pedophile priests were responsible for the "wash-out" lives of boys now grown men (February 3, 1997, p. 36). As for sexual abuse of women and female children, the *AR* felt these were exaggerated or false-memories of vindictive females and if they did happen were not really incidences of victimization or lives made difficult by men (Sillars, February 3, 1997, p. 28). Significantly, when it suited them, this *AR* view about girls and women was the same for Aboriginal peoples.

Hockey pays the price for gay tolerance: Thanks to the courage of NHLer Sheldon Kennedy, the ugly truth about predatory homosexual coaches finally comes out. (Sillars, January 20, 1997, pp. 30-34)

Homosexual predation afflicts women's sports too. (Sillars, January 20, 1997, p. 33)

The national game gets slashed: Critics conclude the problem is hockey, not homosexual predators. (Woodard, February 3, 1997, pp. 42-43)

The CHA versus the chicken-hawks: A new hockey policy shoots wide on barring homosexual predators. (Kalbfleisch, June 16, 1997, p. 35)

One small city in Saskatchewan was a particularly vile place spawning a scandal that rocked the very foundations of Canadian national identity with an assault on the dignity of hockey and heterosexual manliness. Swift Current, Saskatchewan became the epitome of horrific unsafety for young males by making it possible for "homosexual predators, emboldened by a permissive society" to invade the macho world of hockey via

the dressing rooms of junior hockey (January 20, 1997, Cover).

> Over the past decade, Canadians have been scandalized time and again by stories of men groping and sodomizing young males in residential schools, orphanages and boy's clubs. The one place no one expected such abuse to occur was in that last, great bastion of macho culture in Canada: hockey. (Sillars, January 20, 1997, p. 30).

The cover of the *AR* featuring these articles showed a figure of a coach with his arm around a young hockey player as they both sit on a bench in a dressing room. Both have their backs to the viewer. The photo is dark and shadowy and, when read in relation to the caption about homosexual predators, forecasts abuse in every dressing room across the land. Parents and other adults must be vigilant and on guard against this previously unknown danger to the sexual well-being of their male children. Not only were classrooms and churches hostile places for males, now hockey had become unsafe. Questions demanded answers as to how the "ravenous homosexual predator...continued unchecked for so long in the virile, unreconstructed world of hockey" (Sillars, January 20, 1997, p. 30). Worse, other incidences of such abuse surfaced as closer to home in Alberta disclosures were made about former head coach of the World Hockey Association's Edmonton Oiler's, Brian Shaw.

The *AR* used their special report to explore what they had long claimed to know was responsible for the battle against western civilization, the heavens, law and order, as well as the traditional father-headed family and now young, straight, masculinity. Not surprisingly, it was that "the homosexual issue has blurred the boundaries of sexual behavior and morality" (Sillars, January 20, 1997, p. 31). One of their 'experts', Gwen Landolt of REAL Women, warned readers that this was just the beginning of an epidemic of such disclosures. She offered that, "given the growing social acceptance of homosexuality, Canadians should brace themselves for more deviants to pop up behind the benches of young hockey players" (Sillars, January 20, 1997, p. 31).

As further evidence of the link between human rights for homosexuals and a burgeoning world of homosexual pedophilia, the *AR* reported that "Toronto homosexual Gerald Hannon," a former journalism instructor and vocal advocate of so-called "intergenerational sex. . .thought it strange that a society which willingly grants legal rights to homosexuals would react in disgust to the image of Graham James pressing his naked body against a ... 14-year old" (Sillars, January 20, 1997, p. 31). Special reports of intergenerational sex between much older straight men and young girls and women have never been part of the *AR*.

The *AR* could not see Sheldon Kennedy as anything but an innocent victim, fearing for his life and safety. While the *AR* acknowledged the importance of hockey in Kennedy's life, they didn't question a sport system that would make it possible for a young person to put up with abuse. Hockey was more important to Kennedy than telling on an adult who was betraying him because he knew that if he told his mother, she would make him come home, thus destroying his career.

> Kennedy believed that to continue in hockey he had to stay with his abuser; he worried that blowing the whistle would destroy his career and he doubted that anybody would believe him anyway. "If I told my mom she would have made me come home," he said last week. "You tell your friends and they will just portray you as a gay guy." (Sillars, January 20, 1997, p. 31)

Kennedy's fear that others would see him as gay also silenced him.

> **One night when, I was nine, I was sleeping and someone came down. Some twelve-year old who lived downstairs came into my room and started touching me and stuff. I just fucking smashed him in the jaw. I kicked him right in the face and told him to never fucking touch me again. Everything was fine after that. No, actually it wasn't because I didn't say anything about it for quite a few years. I just worried and got mad because it wasn't much different from my dad beating me, other shit heads thinking they can beat me or touch me or whatever. I told Diana and now you. You are the second person to know. (Michel, 1998)**

The sensational coverage of the Graham James case by the *AR*, when juxtaposed with the silence or denial of abuse and data on male perpetrators against young girls, was consistent with its focus on the homosexual pedophile as well as its denouncement of any statistical information that seemed to have been produced by feminist researchers. Kennedy's abuse was not unlike that of many young girls and women, except that his was complicated by the effects of homophobia and heterosexism.

> **When I came out to my mum, after a suicide attempt, she just started crying. And I said "It's not your fault." She said, "I feel like it is. I was never there for you. And, I feel like it is my fault because I never protected you from all the guys that had raped you and stuff like that." And I said, "Well mum that has nothing to do with it you know. It's just how I am." (Jill, 1998)**

> **I started seeing my counsellor after being raped by my mother's boyfriend. (Virginia, 1998)**

The *AR* exploited the hockey scandal by collapsing sexual abuse of children with that of a youth who was fourteen at the time. By relying on the shadowy spectral figure of the homosexual pedophile to explain Graham James, the *AR* was again attempting to achieve its goal of boosting sales through "gutsy" and controversial reporting.

When I think of gays I don't think of sex. I think of people like W.H. Auden, Tchaikovsky, James Dean, Shakespeare, I think of intelligence and accomplishment. Why do others insist on thinking of sex when they think about us? Do they want sex with us? Is that their problem? (Oscar, 1998)

Strangulation by the Charter: Only a lucky few have benefited from 15 years of judicial supremacy. (Woodard, May 5, 1997, pp. 20-21)

Lesbianism gets a makeover: ABC and Disney approve a prime-time homosexual, while the media applauds. (Woodard, May 12, 1997, pp. 28-31)

Rubbing out rubbers: Alberta Health abandons condom advocacy, as homosexuals abandon 'safe sex.' (Woodard, May 19, 1997, pp. 42-43)

In search of the rural gay: Alberta Planned Parenthood pushes teenaged homosexuality. (Woodard, May 26, 1997, p. 33)

A few of his favourite things: Edmonton's gay councillor decries–and confirms–a stereotype. (Milke, June 16, 1997, p. 15)

Embracing diversity–with tiny plastic arms: Popular new dolls range from the disabled to the depraved. (Sheremeta, July 7, 1997, p. 42)

Smart homosexuals vote Conservative: A prominent Canadian Tory makes the oxymoronic case for gaycons. (Kalbfleisch, July 28, 1997, p. 31)

No censors here!: Submissions may be parodies, askew retellings, dark versions or modern adaptations but, most importantly, must be explicitly EROTIC. Preference will give to gay, lesbian, transgendered, multi-gendered and radical sexualities (such as S/M). (Grace, August 11, 1997, p. 17)

The West's gay-friendly 'conservative' parties had better wake up. (Byfield, August 11, 1997, p. 2)

Disney versus Christendom: As a church boycott spreads, the family entertainment conglomerate finds out it's a small world after all. (Di Sabatino, August 18, 1997, pp. 33-34)

Sex and the single priest. (Woodard, August 18, 1997, p. 34)

A head-tax on Orientals: Alberta's Asians suffer a growing addiction to gambling. (Di Sabatino, August 25, 1997, p. 30)

How to make men into mice: The noble sport of hunting is vanishing from our increasingly feminized, fractured, futile culture. (Sillars, September 8, 1997, pp. 28-30)

Les bums de Banff: The resort copes with a plague of Quebecois tramps. (Sillars, September 15, 1997, p. 16)

Proud to escape homosexuality: But in B. C., ex-gays were not allowed in a 'Pride Parade'. (Parker Jr., September 22, 1997, p. 38)

Bursting with pride. (McClellan, September 29, 1997, p. 3)

Of drag queens and doctors' wives: Two new memoirs by Edmontonians are diversely countercultural. (Bunner, December 1, 1997, p. 43)

The war for the children: An international child abductor sues for custody. (Sillars, November 17, 1997, p. 32)

Furious debate over foreskins: A medical ethicist challenges parents' rights to authorize circumcision. Sillars, November 17, 1997, pp. 34-35)

An epidemic of shortsightedness: Most popular AIDS 'solutions' only reinforce destructive behaviours. (Hudson, November 17, 1997, pp. 35-36)

Punishment for B.C.'s pedophile principal: A homosexual school official is fired amid new accusations of sex with students. (Parker, Jr., November 24, 1997, pp. 24-25)

The Simpson phenomenon: A family-values firebrand is shaking up B.C. (Cunningham, November 24, 1997, pp. 34-35)

The feminization of the liberal arts: UBCs equity shrugs off news of a huge pro-female gender gap. (O'Neill, November 24, 1997, pp. 36-37)

Vancouver's growing HIV epidemic: The gay aversion to condoms puzzles experts. (Brunet, October 13, 1997, pp. 44-45)

Compulsive permissivism: Vancouver's liberal drug-addict AIDS strategy is being pushed toward 'an unprecedented catastrophe.' (Brunet, October 20, 1997, pp. 31-32)

The high price of gay sensitivity: The Red Cross is found financially liable for helping infect Canadians with HIV. (Donnelly, October 27, 1997, p. 26)

Predatory Museums in Red Deer

According to the *AR*, new gun control legislation constituted yet another form of male-bashing. Society, was becoming "more urbanized, feminized and eco-neurotic" (Sillars, September 8, 1997, p. 28). Moreover, according to the *AR*, the right of traditional families to own their children was being undermined. This interference by outsiders included medical ethicists who called into question the necessity of circumcising male infants (Sillars, November 17, 1997, pp. 34-35). Given that gays were suspect males to the *AR*, it was not surprising that "gays felt they had been cheated" by the removal of their foreskins (Sillars, November 17, 1997, p. 34). A further assault on masculinity was manifest in fathers' rights being ignored as mothers were busy abducting children away (*AR*, November 17, 1997, p. 32).

I hated my father. (Rupaul, 1998)

My father beat me and my brother up when we little. It was so bad my mother left him. (Michel, 1998)

I love my father but we do not talk a lot. When I came out my mum told him and he came and sat beside me in the tv room, as a show of support but he didn't say anything. (Chastity, 1998)

I mean gender is affecting me less and less as I get older...I think I still live in a traditional masculine role and its tough for me to have to live in a role like that, its part of the reason I am going to therapy...so I do not have to be that kind of mainstream male who dominates women, children and cannot show or even have emotions. Like my dad finds it very hard to be close emotionally. (Oscar, 1998)

As if this were not bad enough, toys could no longer be counted on to either produce gender appropriate behaviours or reveal those who were deviant.

> [P]opular new dolls range from disabled to the depraved...The doll world is becoming not only multicultural, but more raunchy...Big Dyke Barbie shows off her pierced nose, while Hooker Barbie wears a negligee and carries a condom. Drag Queen Barbie is actually Barbie companion Malibu Ken acting out in wig and gown. (Sheremeta, July 7, 1997, p. 42)

I guess you could say I always felt different. As a little kid in preschool I remember preferring barbies to toy cars, or wanting to be a ballerina for Hallowe'en rather than Superman. But I always knew I was different. Early on I realized these differences would make me unpopular so I hid them until...well I'm still hiding them around most people. (Rudolf, 1998)

Single mother, Kari Simpson, emerged as a "spokesman" for the traditional family. Simpson was credible to the *AR* because she claimed to be victimized by a society that treated men unfairly. She was "forthright, even discussing the ordeal [of being a single parent and woman on her own] at her rallies" (Cunningham, November 24, 1997). In one such confessional moment, according to the *AR* Simpson indicated that

> her husband went through a painful personal period and decided he needed to find himself. She says such behaviour is symptomatic of a society that has devalued the role of fathers. While he remains uninvolved with his children, Mrs. Simpson is hopeful that he will once again assume his responsibilities. (Cunningham, November 24, 1997, p. 35)

It was really hard growing into, finding about myself with my parents. Because, like everyday after they found the phone number, my mom sat me down, she had the Bible right at her spot. She would read like scriptures out of it and I was like, I was weirded out. (Jill 1998)

In August, 1997 the provincial government was 'caught' funding a project to gather reminiscences from local gay men and lesbians in Red Deer. A mini moral panic erupted and continued for the month with letters and articles in local newspapers as well as statements made by provincial and federal politicians as well as attracting national media attention. MLA, Stockwell Day, opened fire by declaring that "a museum...was not the appropriate place to champion the cause of gay rights" (Frum, August 26, 1997, p. 17). Frum paraphrased Day's concerns that "the people of Red Deer would be offended by this use of public money and a public facility – especially since one of the missions of this facility is the education of the young" (August 26, 1997, p. 17). Day stated further that the grant "legitimizes a lifestyle choice that doesn't deserve this kind of attention" (McNair, August 25, 1997, p. A7).

Another thing I must say is that religion has never been important to me whatsoever. I have never bought any of it. Neither has my mom. If my dad had his way, we'd be this good little French Catholic family dressing up to go to church once a week, but we aren't. I suppose that has made my being gay more easy for me. (Rudolf, 1998)

Day and fellow Red Deer MLA, Victor Doerksen, demanded, on behalf of their constituents, that the museum return the money and that Community Development Minister Shirley McClellan cancel the grant (Treasurer wants gay study grant money returned, *Edmonton Journal,* August 16, 1997, p. A1). Both claimed further that "the gay-history project offends the city's traditional values" (Goyette, August 20, 1997, p. A14). MP for Yellowhead, Cliff Breitkreuz, declared that "as you know, only 30 years ago it [homosexuality] was in the Criminal Code, and people were prosecuted if they were caught sodomizing....it is strange to go from one extreme to another in such a short time" (McNair, August 25, 1997, p. A7). No one pressed Breitkreuz on why he thought people telling their stories was the same as sodomy.

An *Edmonton Journal* editorial indicated that "gay Albertans pay taxes, vote, even buy lottery tickets" and charged Day with "catering to some narrow-minded constituents and his own prejudices" and "gay-bashing" (Stockwell Day goes gay-bashing again, August 19, 1997, p. A12). Day responded in a letter to the editor accusing the *Edmonton Journal* of name-calling in their descriptions of his actions (August 25, 1997, p. A9). Letter writer, Mathew Martin, wrote in resistance to Day and his supporters with the following.

> Surely Day would not suggest that, simply because more people in our province reject than accept fundamental Christianity (whence Day draws his homophobia), museums should therefore discontinue presenting the role Christianity has played in Alberta's history...it smells like fear bred by superstition. Fear that Alberta is not made in Stockwell Day's Sunday-school image. Fear that the Red Deer museum might show that this small segment of our populations, which Day prefers to think of exclusively as a statistic, are people who live, love, hurt, get angry, have jobs and live with oppression the best they can. Fear that, consequently, the Klein government's roles in maintaining a climate of fear and hostility around gays and lesbians will become visible and unacceptable. (August 19, 1997, p. A13)

Community Development Minister, McClellan, again, declined to recall the grant money and it became public that the project had begun three years previous. Premier Ralph Klein backed Day, Doerksen, and McClellan in a public relations coup that left him looking like a someone trying to balance everyone's interests (Sadava, August 26, 1997,

p. A6). As Goyette insightfully wrote in her *Edmonton Journal* editorial, "Klein chooses to kowtow to bigots. To borrow a chilling Stockwellian phrase, he 'legitimizes a lifestyle choice that doesn't deserve this kind of attention'" (August 20, 1997, p. A14).

Meanwhile the time for the Supreme Court of Canada to hear the Vriend case loomed ever closer and the battle waged by the *AR* against homosexuality increased commensurately. Link Byfield of the *AR* offered the following sarcastic comment about the Red Deer and District Museum:

> [E]nough of this, Alberta, leave the poor Red Deer and District Museum alone. The institution fell haplessly into controversy last month by getting a $10,000 provincial grant to document the experience of homosexuals, past and present, in central Alberta. It will be titled "Furtive Frontier Frolics" or What I did in Red Deer Before I Moved to Vancouver," or something like that. (September 8, 1997, p. 2)

The *AR*, however, did not intend to leave the issue alone. If the Red Deer museum was going to go forward with such a project, Byfield wanted to offer his advice as to what they should include as well as offer more provocative titles for exhibits.

> Suppose it wanted to demonstrate the evils of homosexuality, and all the compulsive and revolting things homosexuals do with urine and feces, and explain in graphs and diagrams why they carry such an astonishing array of intestinal parasites and venereal diseases. Would she [McClellan] grant that too? Would we have fun-loving "Homo on the Range" in Red Deer, but up in Lacombe "The Perils of Perversion" – both sponsored and endorsed by the Alberta government?...If Wild Pansies of Red Deer catches the public fancy, fine. (September 8, 1997, p. 2)

Contrary to the *AR*'s account of a unified "whole whimping, cavilling, sneaking, gutless Cabinet Not Responsible," widespread dissent among government members including cabinet members had grown over the Red Deer grant (September 8, 1997, p. 2). Moreover, given the government's opposition to including sexual orientation in the *Individual Rights Protection Act*, it was disingenuous of the *AR* to suggest that 'homosexuality' was sponsored and endorsed by the Alberta government. A consequence of the attention given to the Red Deer and District history project was a boost in visitors to both Red Deer and the museum.

> **I think the minute that any member of society is oppressed and stereotyped, they tend to think a lot about it, the stereotypes. Why am I butch or femme, top or bottom, that kind of thing. You just get introspective and it is the status of oppression. You ask why the fuck am I oppressed, why am I ghettoized, why am I here, why do these things happen to me? (Oscar, 1998)**

Neurotic MLA Hysteria & Queerly Erotic Obsessions in the *AR*

Another *AR* exposé of "sexual perversions" was brought to public attention in an article titled, "Hold your nose and pay" (Torrance, September 15, 1997). The book under scrutiny was Timothy Anderson's *Neurotic Erotica* published in 1997. Once again the *AR* linked the publication of queer work with low moral standards which "should not receive public money" (Torrance, September 15, 1997, p. 10).

Anderson's awareness of the deconstruction of gender and sex that are the centre of much queer theory resonates in his work. He wrote, for example, that, "I lack internal gender identification. I don't think of myself as male or female. My sexual partners can be, and are, of either sex" (1997, p. 10). Anderson's description of himself as a "polymorph," was unintelligible to the *AR*. His book was described as obscene, perverse, and unworthy of taxpayer dollars.

> **I just used to go home from school everyday, like running home afraid because people were really bugging me, saying "oh you faggot". Blah, blah, blah. We are going to kick your ass after school kinda attitude. Throwing me into my locker, putting notes on my locker, always yelling faggot at me. They were like calling me a faggot before I quite knew who I was. Nowadays I could give two shits if people call me names. They are pathetic. (Michel, 1998)**

In keeping with arts funding generally, the publisher of *Neurotic Erotica,* Slipstream Press, was funded by Alberta Foundation for the Arts and Canada Council grants and Anderson received AFA funding as well. Nevertheless, the *AR* set out to create yet another moral panic over government funding to projects with 'homosexual' content. Setting the panic into motion, the *AR* sent a fax to all eighty-three MLA's. Two of Anderson's poems were included for MLA perusal and they were asked to indicate whether: a) the government should not fund such projects or b) it is of no concern to the government.

The *AR* violated Anderson's copyright by publishing excerpts of his work, out of context. Printing the word "cunnilingus" and other such terms, no doubt, was intended to shock readers. Some words were even blacked out, apparently too shocking for even the *AR* to print.

> **What I wished that families could do, what parents could do if they have a gay kid is educate themselves. Go to the library, find out what supports are out there. Make sure they are not going to the bars. Find some queer people and talk to them. Talk to their kid and tell them how much they love them. Don't tell them it's a phase. Get involved, this is your kid and it is your responsibility to give that kid love and support. Especially if they are gay. I**

was lucky because I got support from my counsellor. My mum couldn't do it. (Virginia, 1998)

There followed a series of pronouncements by MLA's as well as the *AR's* stable of experts. Hermina Dykxhoorn of Alberta Federation of Women United for Families (AFWUF) declared "I feel sick" (Torrance, September 15, 1997, p. 11). Social Credit leader, Randy Thorsteinson, was sickened as well. Of the eighty-three MLA's, only nine responded. Opposition members from the NDP refused to respond since they had not read the book. Liberal critic, Laurie Blakeman, responded on behalf of all sixteen Liberal MLA's by stating that the original premise on which the *AR* relied was false. The nine Conservative MLA's who responded were in favour of limiting funding to such projects and added their own comments on the content as vile, garbage, deviant, extreme, radical, and crappy and they reported that they were shocked, disturbed, even disgusted (Torrance, September 15, 1997). Concern on behalf of "average Albertans" was expressed throughout their responses. The most damning response, however, came from Community Development Minister McClellan herself in her letter "Bursting with pride."

> As I said, I am concerned that this book received indirect support from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. In my view, this is not the kind of art most Albertans would like public funds to support. After reading the book, I asked the foundation chairman to review publishing-grant guidelines and develop options on how to minimize the chance that such books will be supported by public funds in the future. This work is under way. (September 29, 1997, p. 3).

Previous responses from McClellan had been neutral. At least she had read the book. Response from the arts community came, in part, in the form of an advertisement sponsored by Edmonton's independent booksellers in which they stated "*Alberta Report* hates this book–we call that a *good* review" (October 13, 1997, p. 16). Editorials and letters to the editor crowded both the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Calgary Herald.* In an effort to resist the *AR* reporting and threats to arts funding, Edmonton arts newspaper, *Vue*, questioned the nonpayment of a provincial government loan to former owners of the *AR*, a company whose membership was made up of current *AR* president Ted Byfield amongst others (Torrance, October 13, 1997, p. 16). *Vue* contended that in keeping with *AR* logic taxpayer dollars should be demanded back. After all, the *AR* did give disproportionate attention in its pages to "smutty" material and this was supported by a loan from the provincial government.

Why don't we just accept these things instead of thinking there are only two ways to be, as opposed to this rainbow of stuff? And that again goes back to this whole business of sex and the ultimate goal for everyone is that who you sleep with is how you are defined. (Virginia, 1998)

It was incomprehensible to *AR* writers and owners, that their obsessive passions with producing difference was that which sets homosexuals apart. It was this special treatment, that contributed to homophobia and made human rights protection necessary. Implicated in the production of homophobia in the province were Conservative MLA's, who used their private obsessions and values to directly influence public policy. It was often difficult to distinguish the Alberta government from the *AR*. Even if all members of the government did not participate in the continued assault on queer Albertans, including queer and questioning youth in Alberta schools, their silence, in the face of the onslaught, became yet another form of state-sanctioned homophobia.

> **When I was first finding out about it, my parents didn't know but they got hold of a number that I had gotten hold of when I was in grade nine. My parents sat me down and told me that if I was, because they were Christians and believed it was wrong, then I would have to leave. They would pack my things and I had to go because they did not want me in the house. That being gay was evil....blah, blah, blah, whatever. (Jill, 1998)**

November 4, 1997: Supreme Court hearings on Vriend begin. Court hears from 17 interveners, including religious and civil liberties groups.

> Pedophilia is dragged from the closet: A rash of arrests highlights a perversion little understood, except that it's disproportionately homosexual. (Woodard, January 6, 1997, pp. 34-35)
>
> The sin is to talk about it: *Maclean's* drops an accomplished homosexual from its annual honour roll. (Owen, January 6, 1997, p. 28)
>
> Gay foster parent to fight gov't policy: Lesbian foster mom angry about ban on 'non-traditional' families. (Gillis, March 18, 1997, p. A6)
>
> Insistence on 'tradition' no favor to foster kids: Gay, lesbian foster parents need not apply. (Goyette, March 18, 1997, p. A13)
>
> Lesbian mom appeals provincial ruling. (Gillis, March 21, 1997, p. A6)
>
> Virtually normal isn't normal enough: Alberta will maintain its no-homosexual foster care policy. (Daniel, April 7, 1997, p. 9)

The fight for the family goes global. (Dykxhoorn, April 21, 1997, p. 42)

The unnatural law party: Alberta's Conservatives waver in their stand against homosexual foster care, and the consequence may be far-reaching. (*AR*, May 5, 1997, p. 11)

Telegraphing a retreat?: Alberta may no longer oppose gay foster parents. (Torrance, June 23, 1997, p. 12)

Gay foster mom vows court battle: Barred from caring for kids. (MacKinnon, July 15, 1997, p. B1)

Protect foster kids from gay discrimination–Oberg. (Arnold, July 16, 1997, p. A1)

Drop anti-gay fight, province urged. (Arnold, July 17, 1997, p. B3)

Oberg's twisted logic on gay parenting: Perverse gov't bias still lurking in the closet. (Lisac, July 17, 1997, p. A10)

Doublespeak by minister on gay issue. (Filax, July 20, 1997, p. A9)

Gay foster parents can provide excellent care. (Williams, July 22, 1997, p. A7)

Klein blacklist includes most Albertans. (Dashtgard, July 24, 1997, p. A11)

If gays, lesbians want kids, let them make their own: Discrimination isn't the same as bigotry. (Menzies, July 25, 1997, p. A 17)

Province has no policy on gay fostering, says Klein. (Arnold, July 25, 1997, p. A6)

The tale of the blue-eyed Albertans. (Goyette, July 26, 1997, p. G1)

Double disadvantage: discrimination against them described as "Alberta's Double Disadvantage. (Forest, Sen. Jean, July 28, 1997, p. A7)

Questions can find who's a fit foster parent. (Malmo, August 1, 1997, p. A15)

Opening the door to gay parents: Klein approves homosexual foster families while the hard-liners in his caucus run for cover. (*AR*, August 11, 1997, cover)

Silence of the lambs. (*AR*, August 11, 1997, p. 1)

Alberta's new family policy: Klein capitulates on homosexual foster parenting and most right-wing MLAs remain obediently mute. (Torrance, August 11, 1997, pp. 10-15)

Welcome to super unnatural B. C.: Thus neutered, the law against gay adoption was repealed four months later. (Cosh & DeCloet, August 11, 1997, pp. 12-13)

Oberg hasn't changed mind on gays. (Johnsrude, October 3, 1997, p. B7)

Dr. Oberg gets his answer: Activists trot out bogus 'evidence' to support homosexual fostering. (Woodard, October 6, 1997, p. 12)

Report on gay parenting cites discredited doctor: Conclusions strongly negative towards gays, critics say. (Rusnell, October 18, 1997, p. B4)

The judges will decide: Oberg can't make up his mind on gay foster parenting. (Torrance, October 20, 1997, p. 13)

Political agenda behind study: Assess gay parents as individuals. (Editorial, October 21, 1997, p. A14)

The trouble with Ms. T: Incompetent media coverage aside, fatherless foster-parenting is second rate. (Woodard, November 3, 1997)

Gay mom loses battle for more foster children. (Johnsrud, November 19, 1997, p. A6)

Lesbian foster mom fears fallout from publicity. (Danylchuk, April 1, 1998, p. A5)

Judge decides gay foster mom may be named. (Henderson, April 7, 1998, p. A6)

Open letter to an Albertan named Ms. T: Foster mother is a victim of

Alberta's toxic homophobia. (Goyette, April 8, 1998, p. A14)

The T stands for Teresa–Teresa O'Riordan: A Morinville, Alta., lesbian foster mother loses her plea to overturn public policy anonymously. (Donnelly, April 20, 1998, p. 29)

Ministerial review of same-sex foster families 'fear-mongering': Oberg not qualified to overrule professional staff, Opposition says. (Jeffs, March 25, 1999, p. A8)

Predatory Parents

Over the period of July and August, when I was eleven years old, Bob sexually abused me. The first time he started taking my clothes off and I thought this can't happen, what is happening. I tried to get away and he started slapping me and then he raped me. He was my mum's boyfriend. At first I liked him because he was so unlike my dad. He never drank or beat me up. (Virginia, 1998)

Throughout 1997, another issue regarding sexual minorities in Alberta was percolating. Ms. T, a foster parent, made public the new ban on 'non-traditional' families fostering children and youth, as directed by Social Services Minister, Stockwell Day. The government, under the auspices of Day, had been tinkering with ideas like "natural family" beginning in 1996 (Goyette, March 18, 1997, p. A14). The *Edmonton Journal* reported on a January 13, 1997 letter from Day to an advocacy group representing foster parents in which he wrote:

> In those instances where non-traditional families have had children placed with them in the past, we will not be placing more children in these homes...however the children currently in these homes will not be removed. (Gillis, March 18, 1997, p. A6)

Day did not specify a definition of non-traditional families, but it became clear that Ms. T, a "mother of several birth children and foster mother to over 70 foster children" over a seventeen year period was not in a traditional family any longer when she was denied foster children in January, 1997. Ms. T decided to contest the decision through the government's appeal process, arguing that "it's discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation and denying children access to potentially stable foster homes" (Gillis, March 21, 1997, p. A6).

After the group home, it was a pretty good place and I would see

my mum twice a week...I resided in a stupid foster home. They were evangelical Christian. I was there for about a year and a half. They forced me to go to church and so I started getting sick on Sunday. They treated me like shit. They did not want me to see my family or friends. And they cut down on homosexuals and stuff and that pissed me off because at that time I was figuring out who I was. That was the year I started junior high. (Michel, 1998)

Yet another home-grown moral panic was under way in Alberta. Once again, letters to the editor and editorials jammed both daily papers in Calgary and Edmonton. Deploying evasion tactics when pressed on the issue, Bob Scott responding on behalf of Family and Social Services Department stated "there's no department policy...we just try to place children in the most appropriate environment" (MacKinnon, July 15, 1997, p. B1). Given this statement, it is difficult to know on what grounds Ms. T was disallowed foster children.

I heard about the foster parent. She had been a foster parent for eighteen years and raised twenty four kids and now all of a sudden she can't. It's like going through the whole foster care system, and I have first hand knowledge, of how much it [homosexuality of foster parent] is not even an issue. It is not even something that needs to be considered. That really gets to me. (Virginia, 1998)

The assistant deputy minister for children's services wrote in a memo that the Alberta government "will not place a child in a family living in a non-traditional arrangement or with a single person when it is known within the community that they are a practising gay or lesbian" and further that the director of child welfare should act "as a prudent parent reflecting the values of Albertans" (MacKinnon, July 15, 1997, p. B1). Which Albertans and what values were being reflected was unclear. No one said why until the new minister came on board.

In an astonishing admission made on July 16, 1997 new Social Services Minister, Lyle Oberg, stated that the reason for "disallowing gays and lesbians from being foster patents" was "discrimination." (Arnold, 1997, p. A1). Since gay and lesbian communities had indicated that they were discriminated against, Oberg ostensibly did not want to subject children in their care to this discrimination. He failed to note that his government's policy of special treatment for sexual minorities was one of the constitutive marks of that persecution. Rather than continuing the discrimination by refusing foster children to capable foster parents who happened to be lesbian or gay, Oberg might have considered how the government could reduce discriminatory acts.

Mark Lisac noted in his July 17, 1997 article in the *Edmonton Journal* that the "suggestive link of sexual orientation to child molesting takes us into the rough territory of

slanderous bullying" and is part of the "perverse gov't bias still lurking in the closet" (July 17, 1997, p. A10).

> **I wish schools would get some books. But we need teachers and counsellors and principals to get informed as well. But then look at the province we live in, what do we expect anyway? (Virginia, 1998)**

Given the arguments used in the Vriend decision at the provincial Appeal Court, the provincial government was engaged in a form of doublespeak.

> In the Vriend case the fallacious argument that homosexuals and heterosexuals are treated the same in Alberta was argued by the Alberta government in order to deny Vriend the right to have the Alberta Human Rights Commission examine his complaint about wrongful dismissal from King's College. In the Ms. T (lesbian foster mother) case, the Alberta government now claims that lesbians and gays are treated differently in order to withhold the right to foster children. (Filax, July 20, 1997, p. A9)

In his commentary of July 25, 1997, Peter Menzies of the *AR* wrote that "if gays, lesbians want kids, let them make their own" (p. A17). Menzies, like so many others, did not seem to realize that many lesbians and gays do have children and that heterosexual parents 'make' queer children and youth.

> **The one thing my mum mourns, well because I am queer, is that she would never be a grandmother. I told her that lesbians were having children all the time now and I would as well when I find the right lesbian and have my career up and going. (Chastity, 1998)**

Entering the panic on July 15, Premier Ralph Klein, restated that "his government has no policy on whether gays and lesbians can take care of foster children " (Arnold, p. A6). Later he advised that the Tories would debate gay fostering (Arnold, September 24, 1997, p. B5). Meanwhile, Sen. Jean Forest indicated that Alberta discrimination against Alberta gays and lesbians might aptly be called "Alberta's Double Disadvantage" (July 28, 1997, p. A7).

The *AR* argued that "only heterosexual union[s] [were] blessed by the Bible" (Bell, September 22, 1997, p. A11) and reiterated its cant that "the gay lifestyle contains tremendous health risks and instability". This conflation of gay and lesbian even in the face of an explicitly lesbian public moral panic was typical of *AR* reporting (Notdorft, October 6, 1997, p. A13). Former minister Connie Osterman agreed with Day and Oberg when she opined that "by and large males and females are very different, and we need that difference, and children need to understand how grown-ups make that difference work"

(Daniel, April 7, 1997, p. 9). 'Normal' was linked, explicitly and implicitly, to natural, family, traditional, heterosexual, and gender difference throughout the *AR*'s coverage (Daniel, April 7, 1997, p. 9; Torrance, August 11, 1997, p. 13).

> **I was real angry because they stuck me in this religious fundamentalist home. Don't I have any rights as a queer kid to be placed in a home without people like that? Like where the hell were my rights anyway? No one ever thought this shouldn't happen. Or maybe they did and hoped those Christ-lovers would straighten me out. I was smarter this time. I called my social worker and told her to get me the hell out of there, after a week. They even tried to make me go to church! (Michel, 1998)**

On September 18, 1997 Ms. T submitted a report to Oberg that contained a compilation of research on foster parents. This was in response to an earlier report submitted on July 11, 1997 by some of the *AR*'s favourite experts on 'homosexuality', M. Genius of the National Foundation for Family Research and Education and Claudio Violato, professor at the University of Calgary. The July report cited the work of Paul Cameron of the Family Research Institute out of Washington, D.C. Cameron's work was deleted with an x in the copy I have but it is not clear that Oberg's copy had Cameron's work 'x-ed' out. The *Edmonton Journal* reported that:

> Cameron was expelled from the American Psychological Association in 1983 for violating the association's code of ethics. Both the American and Canadian psychological associations and the American Sociological Association have censured Cameron for "consistently misinterpreting and misrepresenting research on sexuality, homosexuality, and lesbianism...further Dr. John Service, executive director of the Canadian Psychological Association, said the association would have "serious concerns" if members cited Cameron as a legitimate researcher" (Rusnell, October 18, 1997, p. B4)

In spite of the evidence offered in Ms. T's report, Oberg refused to alter his position and instead reiterated what he said earlier (Johnsrude, October 3, 1997, p. B7). The Ms. T debate and moral panic continued into 1998.

The *AR* did a special feature on Ms. T. titled, "Opening the door to gay parents" on August 11, 1997. The cover, like its shadowy predecessors dyke to diva (May 12, 1997) and hockey coach predator (January 20, 1997), featured a shadowy pair of gay men facing forward yet lurking in a doorway. They are entwined with one another while their free arms are extended out, offering an invitation to a small child who is in the forefront of the picture. The child is poised in hesitation at the threshold, uncertain as to whether he/she should enter. The *AR* represented the two adults as male even though the foster parent that had brought this issue to the public eye was Ms. T. Since lesbian predators do

not have the same cultural capital as do gay men, a conflation of lesbians with gay occurred yet again. With the words, "Klein approves homosexual foster families while the hard-liners in his caucus run for cover," the *AR* assigned blame to both the premier and homosexuals (August 11, 1997, cover). Inside, the caption "silence of the lambs" greeted the reader alongside a mini copy of the cover. Invoking both the Bible and a popular film, the message suggested that children are going to slaughter in this latest homosexual war against traditional families in Alberta.

> **Like tv sets you up for failure. Like look at these picture perfect families, and look how they got their lives together after somebody got out of the Betty Ford Centre or after somebody died. Well, that is not true. You go through years, if somebody dies who you are close to, or whatever. You go through years of heartache and heartbreak. Like Little House on the Prairies, well it is little joke on the prairies. (Michel, 1998)**

The *AR* was disappointed and even "mystified" by Oberg's remarks, which they thought offered support to claims of discrimination made by 'homosexuals' (Torrance, August 11, 1997, p. 10). Attempting to put the government on the defensive, the *AR* sent a fax to fourteen Conservative MLAs and ministers, followed by three phone calls asking for the Klein government to state as policy that it refused foster children to homosexuals. Only one MLA, Ron Hierath, responded yet refused to criticize the premier (Torrance, August 11, 1997, p. 11). Increasing the pressure, the *AR* sent another fax to the rest of the Conservative caucus. Again there was very little response. Searching for dissent, the *AR* found Paul Nathanson, a 'homosexual', who worried "about the possibility of children being harmed by some homosexuals, primarily lesbians, who have an ideological framework that might prevent them from presenting an unbiased attitude towards the other sex" (Torrance, August 11, 1997, p. 14). The fact that most 'homosexuals' were born and raised by straight parents, that many were already parents, and that some were children and youth seemed to escape everyone as well.

> **I know exactly how they would react if they knew I was gay. My mom would be sorta okay with it, but maybe not as okay on the inside as she would appear on the outside. My dad would be a bit upset and would put both feet in his mouth. He'd probably try to blame someone, maybe Oscar, because he has been calling me a lot. I think my parents suspect he's gay and might be 'recruiting' me or something. Maybe they'd blame Ellen Degeneres. (Rudolf, 1998)**

On April 16, 1998, a Court of Queen's Bench Justice ruled that the media could publish Ms. T's name, thus breaking her anonymity, a measure she had chosen in order to protect the identity of the foster child in her care. On April 20, 1998, the *AR* along with

other media, released Ms. T's name along with the town she lived in, publicly outing her. Given their 1993 (Byfield, June 14, 1993, p. 52) and 1997 (Owen, January 6, 1997, p. 28) stand on keeping sexual orientation a private matter, this contradiction revealed the punitive ways in which the *AR* was willing to treat sexual minorities. In her "Open letter to an Albertan named Ms. T" in which she refused to out Ms. T, *Edmonton Journal* writer, Linda Goyette summarized this treatment by the *AR* by indicating, "bigotry is a chosen lifestyle" (April 8, 1998, p. A14). An effect of this bigotry was that foster children were denied the care of one excellent foster parent, Ms. T, for the years 1997 and 1998.

> **I think the teachers were afraid of me. Because in grade twelve I am showing. I dropped my mask and I am starting to let loose of my way of masking myself. And I started at the local AIDS organization. (Jack, 1998)**

April 2, 1998 - Supreme Court rules in Vriend that Alberta's human rights law is unconstitutional and must protect people from discrimination based on their sexual orientation.

Predatory Teachers, Supreme Judgements, and a Seismic Moral Panic

Christian youth, even older ones, are particularly at risk to the perils of homosexuality or so representations of the *Vriend* case that spanned the 1990s would have us believe. The *Vriend* case is the signatory case to understanding representations as well as experiences of homophobia and heterosexism in Alberta. This section represents the culmination of *Vriend* with the Supreme Court ruling of April 2, 1998 in which Alberta's human rights law was ruled unconstitutional and which effectively changed the province's human rights laws to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

> **I was dressed in drag but had to take the bus to my party. This guy started harassing me calling me a faggot and homo and he was going to kick my fucking butt and then he said "you're my fucking bitch" so I moved to the front of the bus. The driver's like "this person, guy, this human being has rights. Just as many rights as you do. Just read the Charter of Rights and Freedoms Act. Just because he is dressed like this does not mean that you have the right to pick on him. People are allowed to express themselves anyway they wish." I still know the bus driver's name and number and I am going to phone the transit commission and tell them what a wonderful guy he is. (Michel , 1998)**

In his Court of Appeal judgement against Vriend on February 23, 1996, the Honourable Mr. Justice McClung, stated the following:

> Beyond that, I say nothing as well of the respondent's answer to the appellant's concerns that the term "sexual orientation" is limited to "traditional" homosexual practices shared by consenting adults, and its IRPA inclusion would never be raised as a permissive shield sheltering other practices, both heterosexual and homosexual, commonly regarded as deviance in both communities. It is pointless to deny that the Dahmer, Bernardo and Clifford Robert Olsen prosecutions have recently heightened public concern about violently aberrant sexual configurations and how they find expression against their victims. (McClung, JC, 1996, p. 22)

The association of Delwin Vriend with three men known for horrific crimes of murder was an epistemic assault to Vriend as well as to other sexual minorities in Alberta. It is unlikely, for example, that such a string of murderous individuals would have been written into a judgement in relation to a divorced woman appealing her firing from a Catholic school.[9]

On November 17, 1997 the *AR* did a special feature on Vriend titled, "Winners & Losers" (Cover). The caption underneath stated, "Why do Canada's courts invent charter rights for gays and not for babies?" inserted between a picture of Vriend and his partner and a classic picture of a fetus. With this cover Vriend has become the penultimate homosexual predator in a twist of AR il/logic, as now the unborn not just children and youth, are turned into prey and therefore unsafe. Inside the magazine, articles included, "The chosen and the choosers: once again the Supreme Court embraces gays and abandons babies"; "From perverse to macabre"; "When Vriend wins, so does Graham James"; "The slavery-abortion parallel"; and "A Supreme display of judicial prejudice."

> **Even in my last year of high school, a lot of teachers wouldn't talk to me. They would say I had great grades but they never came up to me, like they did with other kids, and ask me how I was doing. Or stuff like that. (Jack, 1998)**

Given the negative national attention to Alberta during the Supreme Court hearing of *Vriend*, the *AR* had work to do in its war against 'homosexuality', in advance of the Supreme Court's announcement of its decision. On December 15, 1997, the *AR* featured an advertisement titled, "Gay 101 in our schools?" addressed to concerned Christians, asking if they knew what their children were being taught about homosexuality in schools and whether their children knew how to protect themselves (*AR*, back inside cover). A wide-eyed little girl stares out at readers and unknown dangers in order to raise parental fears. For a small donation readers can join the Christian Heritage Party of Canada and

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[9]See O'Byrne & McGinnis (1996) in which they argue this as an analogous ground.

receive a book titled *Homosexuality and the politics of truth.* February 9, 1998 found a similar ad titled, "Guess why trouble-makers like Delwin Vriend always win in court?", this time asking for support for Alberta Federation for Women United For Families, headed by Hermina Dykxhoorn. Dykxhoorn's Family Federation needed help with their cause "against easy divorce, permissive sex-ed, radical gender feminism, the normalization of homosexuality and any other issue that threatens families" and asked for donations as well (*AR*, p. 21).

> **Ralph's new Vriend: Premier Klein says he'll cave in on gay rights rather than opt out. (Friesen, September 8, 1997, p. 12)**
>
> **Gay rights grind ever-onward: The Crown surrenders a key point on 'spousal benefits.' (Woodard, November 10, 1997, p. 26)**
>
> **Truth becomes a hate crime. (Woodard, November 10, 1997, p. 26)**
>
> **How did it happen that we have no right to life, but do have a right to sodomy? (Byfield, November 17, 1997, p. 2)**
>
> **The Vriend case isn't simply about rights, but about who really runs the country. (Byfield, December 15, 1997, p. 52)**
>
> **Rumblings of a counter -revolution: Alberta's justice minister blames politicians for the rising tide of judicial activism. (Woodard, January 19, 1998, pp. 10-14)**
>
> **Hold hands or flunk: A UVic grad fights being labelled a homophobe. (Parker Jr., S. January 19, 1998, pp. 42-43)**
>
> **If Vriend beats Alberta, freedom of religion dies. (Cantlie, January 19, 1998, p. 14)**
>
> **Scapegoating the Indian residential schools: The noble legacy of hundreds of Christian missionaries is sacrificed to political correctness. (Donnelly, January 26, 1998, pp. 6-11)**

On January 19, 1998, the *AR* featured an article about "judicial activism", with concerns from a stern looking provincial Justice Minister Jon Havelock. The *AR* fretted over appointments made in backrooms with input from "an array of feminist, aboriginal, Jewish, gay and criminal-rights activists" (Woodard, January 10, 1998, p. 10). The problem of judicial activism, according to Havelock and *AR* was that the Supreme Court was made up of the wrong kind of person.

Havelock was concerned about the upcoming Vriend decision and he "worries

about what may happen, if they [Alberta government] do not" invoke the notwithstanding clause (Woodard, January 14, 1998, p. 14). The *AR* spelled out the remedy for its readership if the Supreme Court ruled in favour of Vriend. That remedy was to pressure MLAs to invoke Section 33 of the Charter, the notwithstanding clause. Not only would this remove the threat of Vriend, the individual homosexual who stood in for all homosexuals, but, according to Reform MP Jason Kenney and endorsed by the *AR*, invoking the notwithstanding clause "will have begun the recovery of democracy" as well (Woodard, January 19, 1998, p. 14). Provincial Treasurer, Stockwell Day indicated that the province might use the notwithstanding clause (Jeff, March 31, 1998, p. A1) and Klein mused that the Supreme Court decision could have a financial impact on the Alberta government (Jeffs & Johnsrude, April 1, 1998, p. A6). Both these warnings implied that the Alberta government had a strong sense they were going to lose at the Supreme Court.

> **Here's to you, Mr. Robinson: It turns out the homosexual MP's young Cuban playmate has been allowed to travel free as his 'spouse.' (Bloedow, February 2, 1998, p. 11)**
>
> **Human rights is one of B.C.'s few growth industries. (DeCloet, February 2, 1998, p. 50)**
>
> **So much for graphic, how-to sex education: A long-term rise in teen pregnancy leaves more girls in misery and conservatives feeling vindicated. (Hansard, February 16, 1998, p. 25)**
>
> **Experts in their fields: Ottawa pays a gay lobbyist to survey gay bashing. (Cunningham, February 23, 1998, p. 7)**
>
> **Cupid is a homophobe: Langara College is ridiculed for banning a Valentine's Day poster. (Torrance, March 2, 1998, pp. 34-35)**
>
> **Apart from gambling and balanced budgets, what exactly does Ralph Klein believe in? (Byfield, March 23, 1998, p. 2)**
>
> **So what about opting out on Vriend? (Donnelly, March 30, 1998, p. 12)**
>
> **Oh, those wily coyotes: Farmers suffer a reign of terror in Smoky Lake thanks to a warm winter. (Sheremeta, March 30, 1998, p. 23)**
>
> **Opting out an option if public consents, Day says. (Jeffs, March 31, 1998, p. A1)**

April 2, 1998: Supreme Court rules that Alberta's human rights law is unconstitutional and must protect people from discrimination based on their sexual orientation.

> This is clearly an example of a distinction which demeans the individual and strengthens and perpetrates the view that gays and lesbians are less worthy of protection as individuals in Canada's society. The potential harm to the dignity and perceived worth of gay and lesbian individuals constitutes a particularly cruel form of discrimination. (Mr. Justice Peter Cory, *Vriend vs Alberta*, 102, p.30/47, April 2, 1998).

In a stunning 8-1 decision, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favour of Vriend and against the Province of Alberta.

> The Supreme Court of Canada has rebuked the Alberta government for evading its democratic duty to prevent discrimination against all Albertans, including gays and lesbians. In a unanimous decision released Thursday, the court ruled that legal protections must immediately be made available to the province's homosexual community. It ended a seven-year battle by concluding that sexual orientation must be "read in," or assumed to be part of, the Individual's Rights Protection Act as a prohibited ground of discrimination...the deliberate exclusion was not an oversight. The denial of equal rights reinforces stereotypes that gays and lesbians are less deserving and less worthy, he [Cory] said. It "sends a strong and sinister message...It could well be said that it is tantamount to condoning or even encouraging discrimination against lesbians and gay men. (Ovenden, April 3, 1998, p. A3).

> Hunt, J.A. concluded that "[g]iven these considerations and the context here, it is my opinion that the failure to extend protection to homosexuals under the *IRPA* can be seen as a form of government action that is tantamount to approving ongoing discrimination against homosexuals. Thus, in this case, legislative silence results in the drawing of a distinction." (Hunt J.A. April 2, 1998, *Vriend vs. Alberta*, p. 17/47).

The Supreme Court clearly stated that the Alberta government's action was that of state produced and sanctioned discrimination and that in fact, provincial "silence" on the part of elected representatives resulted in the drawing of distinction, or special status. Victory for queer Albertans was short-lived however, as Premier Ralph Klein decided to wait a week, consulting with his caucus, who were to hear from their constituents, whether to invoke the notwithstanding clause.

The week became open season for homophobic diatribes against Albertans who were queer. The proliferation of hateful discourse was the culmination of years of

government resistance working together with organized anti-gay lobbies including the Canada Family Action Coalition headed by Roy Beyer, Calgary's Parents Rights Association, Medicine Hat Citizens' Impact Coalition, Alberta Pro-Life, Alberta Federation of Women United For the Family lead by Hermina Dykxhoorn, feminist watcher and University of Calgary Professor Ted Morton and his tiny Alberta Civil Society Association and, of course, the *AR* (Woodard, April 20, 1998, p. 13). Beyer cited fears that "the ruling could be used to protect polygamy, bestiality and pedophilia" and local Alberta Federation of Women United For the Family president Cory Morcos said "accepting the ruling will erode family values". Both called for Albertans to flood MLA offices with demands to invoke the notwithstanding clause (Jeffs, April 3, 1998, p. A3).

Elected representatives made public statements as well. For example, Lac La Biche-St. Paul MLA Paul Langevin said "people know where I stand on the gay rights issue, I believe it's a moral issue and I'm not prepared to support gay rights this time" (Johnsrude, April 13, 1998, p. A9). Environment Minister Ty Lund said "my constituency is very, very upset that unelected judges are telling elected politicians what to do" and added that his constituents believe in law and order (Pedersen, April 5, 1998, p. A1). There was unleashed on the province unprecedented displays of hatred and vitriol. Members of the provincial government were particularly culpable in placing queer Albertans at risk in such a public way.

The moral panic in the wake of *Vriend* went beyond even the Premier's wildest imaginings. He referred to the volume of hate as "appalling faxes and phone calls" along with form and handwritten letters which "quite frankly make[s] your stomach churn" (Johnsrude, April 8, 1998, p. A20). Thousands of calls and letters went into the premier's office and to MLAs. Opponents of the ruling launched a newspaper and television ad campaign which argued that inclusion of sexual orientation would promote homosexuality and weaken the family. Talk show hosts entertained the spewing of hate from anyone with an opinion.

> ""I don't want to see them, I don't want to smell them, I don't want anything to do with them," the caller said of gays, the disgust palatable in his voice." (Geiger, April 12, 1998, *EJ*, F4)

> **The Vriend case is about bigotry. (*The Edmonton Journal*, April 3, 1998, p. A16)**

A week later, Klein, flanked by cabinet minsters, McClellan and Havelock, declared that the province would *not* invoke the notwithstanding clause. They would, however, place "fences" against gay rights outside of housing and employment issues. An advertisement titled, "Acts about Alberta's human rights laws and the Vriend decision" was placed by the government of Alberta in all daily newspapers around the province in an attempt to explain the limitedness of the decision and hopefully allay fears (April 15, 1998, p. A7).

The *AR* relentlessly objected that Albertans were opposed to the Premier's

position, as if queer Albertans, were not Albertans. April 20, 1998 found a special report and cover titled "Ralph's new friends" featuring Delwin Vriend and his partner smiling in front of the legislative building in Edmonton. Rural Albertans were said to be particularly upset. Annie Smith of Gwynne, Alberta wrote in response: "it infuriates me to know that as a rural constituent, religious fundamentalists and the Alberta Federation of Women United for the Family presume to speak on my behalf. They most certainly do not represent my beliefs" (April 19, 1998, p. A15).

The *AR* trotted out one of their by now stock arguments that homosexuals are really "a rich, educated, unpersecuted elite" who have tremendous political influence out of proportion with actual numbers (Woodard, April 20b, 1998, p. 13). Elsewhere, concerned citizens like Mrs. Dykxhoorn representing Alberta Federation of Women United for the Family insisted that, "the Supreme Court's decision in *Vriend* does represent an unprecedented use of raw judicial power, both in a 'social engineering' sense–attempting to remake the moral order of society–and also in a strictly legal and constitutional sense–'legislating from the bench.' (Woodard, April 20a, 1998, p. 15). The *AR* suggested further, that Havelock was set up by Rod Love, aide to Klein when Havelock attempted to use the "notwithstanding clause" earlier in March to restrict payments to Albertans who were wrongfully sterilized on behalf of the government (Woodard, April 20a, 1998, p. 14). Given the public outcry against Havelock in his earlier attempt to invoke the "notwithstanding clause", it was unlikely, according to the *AR* that he would oppose Klein's decision not to invoke the "notwithstanding clause" in *Vriend*.

In the same *AR* issue, April 20, 1998, there was another call for donations and action, this time from Roy Beyer's Canada Family Action Coalition (CFAC). The advertisement titled, "It's not too late! - If Vriend wins...who loses?" stated that "the natural family, the fabric of our society, will be seriously undermined" (p. 36). The ad disingenuously charged that Vriend was fired for violating the college's policy regarding sex outside of marriage. The CFAC, like AFWUF, continued to deny that queer people, like Vriend, came from families much like their own.

Elsewhere, *AR* patriarch, founder and president Ted Byfield, denounced Klein's decision to not invoke the "notwithstanding clause" in *Vriend* as "probably his most grievous decision ever" (April 20, 1998, p. 44).

> Why is this issue so divisive? I think it's because this particular activity, among males anyway, revolts and offends many people. The spectacle of men coupling, while certainly absurd and the subject of snickers and jokes from the Greeks onward, many also find repulsive. They see it as a perversion of nature, like garbage in a river of toxic blight on a forest, as something unnatural, something not intended to be. (April 20, 1998, p. 44)

Significantly, April 20 was the same issue in which Ms. T was outed by the *AR*.

May 4, 1998 found yet another advertisement in the *AR* by CFAC, this time for a "public rally for the family" in which Kari Simpson was to advise concerned Albertans about "the Vriend decision: what it means–what we must do" (p. 32). The list of potential

dangers included threats to education, children and youth, the traditional family, as well as gay adoption, gay public exhibitionism and even the curtailment of traditional free speech. The next page contained a petition, sponsored by CFAC, calling on Premier Klein to use the "notwithstanding clause" (May 4, 1998, p. 33). In the same issue the *AR*'s token queer voice, John Mckellar of Homosexuals Opposed to Pride Extremism (HOPE) declared his group as pro-civilization and anti special rights for gays (Woodard, May 4, 1998, p. 14).

In her public rally (rant?), anti-gay activist Kari Simpson, summarized the aftermath of the years in which the Vriend decision worked its way through the courts: "make no mistake, people...it's a war" (Steel, May 25, 1998, p. 10), bringing to mind to readers of "radical deconstructionist" Michel Foucault, his statement that "the history which bears and determines us has the form of *war* rather than that of a language: relations of power, not relations of meaning" (Foucault 1980, p. 114).

Gay rights upheld: Alberta won't challenge the Supreme Court ruling. (Johnsrude, April 13, 1998, (p. A1)

Our once gutsy Premier Ralph Klein now quails and cowers under the Ottawa whip. (Byfield, April 13, 1998, p. 52)

Ralph's new friends: Klein sides with gays, the Supreme Court, Ottawa and the media in defiance of the will of Albertans. (*AR*, cover)

If Klein has managed to split the right in Alberta, this is not inconsequential. (Byfield, April 20, 1998, p. 44)

Ralph gets moral, and Alberta gets gay rights: How Klein snookered public opinion to satisfy homosexuals, the Supreme Court and the media. (Woodard, April 20, 1998, pp. 12-17)

A rich, educated, unpersecuted elite: 'This isn't an oppressed minority; this is a decadent elite.' (Woodard, April 20, 1998, p. 13)

The strategy of a human-rights ambush. (Woodard, April 20, 1998, p. 14)

What use are grizzlies? They look nice, but they aren't ecologically crucial. (Sillars, April 20, 1998, p. 25)

The media's inquisitional court has handed down another denunciation of inquisitions. (Byfield, T., April 27, 1998, p. 44)

Albertans have to tell Ralph to give them a direct vote of gay rights.

(Byfield, L., April 27, 1998, p. 2)

Until we regain control over our own laws, we can't call ourselves a democracy. (Byfield, May 4, 1998, p. 2)

One surrender too many: Klein's capitulation on Vriend–and much else prompts talk of an alternative conservative party. (Steel, May 4, 1998, pp. 10-12)

Ralph's line in the sand on a slippery slope: Recent history demonstrates the futility of talking about 'fences' against gay rights. (Woodard, May 4, 1998, pp. 13-14)

Gays for family values: A Toronto homosexual campaigns against special rights. (Woodard, May 4, 1998, pp. 14-15)

Rally 'round the family" Sceptical of Klein's promised 'fences,' CFAC keeps the heat on with rallies and a petition. (Steel, May 25, 1998, p. 9)

A firebrand from B. C.: CFAC brings in Kari Simpson to rouse opposition to gay rights. (Steel, May 15, 1998, p. 10)

So where are those 'fences'?: Klein dithers while the gay agenda gathers momentum (Woodard, June 15, 1998, pp. 16-17)

The predators run the show: Grizzlies and wolves are the real muscle in the food chain. (Sheremeta, November 2, 1998)

In an August 13, 1998 interview with *Outlooks,* a Calgary magazine for Alberta's queer communities, Klein made the following statement: "What matters most to me is whether or not somebody is a good person. Are they hard-working? Honest? Sincere? Responsible? Are they good and decent human beings? Those are the important things" (Arnold, August 13, 1998, p. A5). It is unlikely that Klein had a sudden epiphany in the wake of the Supreme Court ruling in *Vriend.* If he had done the right thing much earlier he would have saved thousands of taxpayer dollars spent on a series of legal battles in the service of a minority group of religious fundamentalists who wanted special rights for themselves in the province. Waiting for others to take responsibility and do the right thing, Klein aided and abetted Christian fundamentalists in their war against homosexuality.

Will the Real Predators Please Stand Up?

In their battle against homosexuality, specifically with respect to human rights protection and funding for cultural projects related to queer Albertans, but also against the right of queer people to exist in peace and harmony or at all within the province of Alberta, the *AR* and their supporters are exposed as the predators. They prey on people's fears and anxieties. With their vitriol and hate *AR* prey on innocent youth who are questioning or queer. *AR* owners and writers are obsessed with sex, especially the sex lives of other people. *AR* and those like them are the ones who expect special rights and consideration for their cause from elected government representatives. Their relentless hatred represented a threat to the lives and well-being of some of the citizenry of the Province of Alberta.

Relying on discourses of sin, crime, deviance, and pathology to set 'homosexuals' apart as a separate species whose lives embraced a culture of death, the *AR* obsessively linked funding for human rights protection for homosexuals or any queer project with the predatory nature of queers in their compulsion to steal children and youth in order to beat death as well as bring about the demise of the traditional family, law and order, democracy, freedom of speech, western civilization, the planet and even heaven. Their mission was the complete elimination from public consciousness of a group of people.

> **People tell me that I'm a very enjoyable kind of person, very happy and I think it is just my natural way. I came from a family, you know my mother's side especially where storytelling is a big thing and my granny is a very good story teller. I kind of picked up her talent and now its finally coming out, especially with friends. (Jack, 1998)**

The richness of the lives of the queer and questioning youth who participated in this research deconstructs the 'homosexual' produced by the *AR* and, in doing so reveals *AR* hypocrisy and distortions. This document is a testimony to all queer people but especially to queer youth in Alberta, who live and love in all their humanness in spite of the *Alberta Report* and its supporters. The last words, rightfully, are theirs.

> **This is like a gender war, kind of thing, but this is also a war about orientation. (Virginia, 1998)**

> **I demanded that my library carry The Advocate, for balance, if they were going to carry the Alberta Report and all its fucking shit...but the librarian said she could not do that but would not tell me why. (Oscar, 1998)**

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After Words

The purpose of this research was to explore the effects of conflicting discourses on queer youth in Alberta schools by documenting how these youth make sense of their identity, reality, and experiences in the context of heteronormative, homophobic, as well as alternative discourses. In the week prior to the defence of this dissertation, Aaron Webster, a gay man from Vancouver was beaten to death in Stanley Park. A rally to protest what was categorized as a hate crime by Vancouver police was attended by fifteen hundred people. In Britain, the BBC apologized after more than five hundred viewers complained about sexual comments actor, Rupert Everett, made on the air about "pop sensation" Robbie Williams. In the USA, Brad Fuglei, a nineteen year old who organized gay rights rallies at his high school in Nebraska, died of an apparent suicide. During the week following my defence, bereaved gay and lesbian spouses launched class-action suits for four hundred million dollars for outstanding survivor benefits from the Canada Pension Plan, and the federal government announced that it will bring in legislation to provide gays and lesbians with additional hate crime protection. During that week, as well, I attended a meeting convened by the Alberta Teachers Association to discuss inclusive policy and strategies to address discrimination against sexual minorities. This is the ongoing messiness of the legal, popular cultural, and educational contexts within which queer youth negotiate their lives.

The first paper of the dissertation, "Gendering: Troubled Theories, Troubling Identities", explored how discourses of gender as it relates to sexuality impacts gender nonconformist children and youth. My project was to identify discourses about gender and demonstrate how these have been taken up by experts and other authorities to control children and youth. While some of these discourses construe gender as an issue of power in which males in a culture have or own power, my concern was to focus on how knowledge produced by experts about gender produce what can be spoken about gender and how it can be spoken about and, in doing so, produce related social practices. The ways in which experts take up discourses of gender, including how these construe relations of power, is an exercise of power on the lives of those who are expected to assume the subject positions produced by these discourses.

In the second paper, "Production and Consumption of Youth Identities: Understanding Youth in the Context of Youth Studies and Popular Culture", I examined how social science research has produced the category 'youth' and how queer youth negotiated the subject positions constrained by this category. I was also interested in how queer youth mediate the expert accounts of what it is to be a youth from Youth studies and popular cultural discourses about youth. Like the paper on discourses of gender, juxtaposing queer youth voices with expert discourses demonstrated that there is often little relationship to the expert material.

The third paper, " Legal Production of Sexual Minorities in Canada and the Impact on Education" explored how legal discourse has produced sexual minority status in Canada and, in doing so, how the boundaries of illegitimate sexual minorities have been repositioned. I explored how Bill C23 and other laws and legal decisions maintain a notion of 'normal' and 'abnormal' members of a community, even as possibilities are opened up

for sexual minorities. I also looked at how legal discourse has impacted education in Canada through three cases that focus on teachers and presented three "stories" drawn from ethnographic interviews with queer youth. The stories drawn from queer youth interviews are examples of experiences of homophobia and heterosexism which queer people share in common.

This does not mean that these queer youth carried a victim identity, nor does this mean that these queer youth were all the same. Indeed, homophobia and heterosexism differentially affected those queer youth who had little access to resources because their families were poor or working class or because they had been ejected from their homes. Similarly, Aboriginal queer youth and the queer youth of colour who spoke to me not only had to negotiate homophobia and heterosexism but racism as well. By placing the voices of the youth in the text in the way that I did, I hoped to demonstrate that, even though they have faced common difficulties as queer youth, they are different from each other.

In the fourth and final paper, "Queer Identities and Strange Representations in the Province of the 'Severely Normal'", I examined representations in the *Alberta Report* and by elected officials and other citizens in the province in order to highlight the culture of moral panic about 'homosexuality' prevalent in Alberta during that time. While admittedly the representations in the *Alberta Report* are over the top, the circulation of this weekly magazine into waiting rooms of banks, car washes, mechanics, dentists, and doctors, and in many schools in this province positions the *Alberta Report* as the dominant media representation of queer people in this province. The *Alberta Report* has been able to escape intense and sustained public scrutiny in Alberta. I am hopeful that as I present and publish some of this work, more people will come to recognize the *Alberta Report* as a vehicle for hate mongering.

In each of the papers, the voices of the queer youth served to deconstruct the categories produced by dominant discourses of 'gender', 'youth', and 'sexuality'. I wanted to finish the dissertation with the voices of queer youth because their words demonstrate that, while many of them had been victimized, they were not victims. It was important to me to represent the stories of the queer youth in this study as more than painful stories. Nevertheless, this text is permeated with painful experiences of queer youth as they negotiated the heaviness of discourses that impacted them.

The stories of these youth are not captured in legal, educational, expert, or popular cultural texts, nor can they be captured in this text. The fragments of their voices were intended to disrupt closure or certainty and represent the partiality of lives that refuse to be trapped in totalizing academic and popular cultural discourses. By offering partial stories and fragmented voices, I wanted to resist fixing the identities of individual queer youth and insist on the constant, ongoing identity formation of queer subjects. For this reason, I do not explicitly locate myself in the text by listing a set of fixed identities. Nevertheless, I am in this text as a queer scholar whose decisions about the selection of materials, writing strategies, and organization of the text reflect my commitment to queer theory and politics.

In my introduction I ruminated about the status of queer scholars in the academy. I noted that queer researchers are often placed in a double bind in which they risk not

being heard because of their perceived deviance. The double bind is writing from within a heteronormalized culture in which the queer researcher is both the subject of what she writes and objectified as deviant. Disallowing the critical queer scholar to function as an authorized category is implicated in the same logic that deauthorizes, delegitimizes, and silences social deviants. I had hoped to end this text with the fourth paper, letting the youth involved in this study have the last words without once again subjecting them to interpretation by 'the expert'. I was worried that without the last word these youth would again be rendered silent in educational discourse. I am also worried that the queer researcher still does not have the authority to ensure the space for these queer youth to speak.

> **Gloria, I am only telling you this stuff because I want things to be different for others. You know me, I love my life but I sure wish that my school years were different. Even when that guy tried to beat me up after the Vriend decision, Diana beat on him till I got up and we were out of there. He caught us off guard. He jumped me from behind. Now, I'm taking self-defense and will not get caught again. I will be ready. (Jack, 1998)**